

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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NO NAME.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. LECOUNT mixed the *sal volatile* with water, and administered it immediately. The stimulant had its effect. In a few minutes, Noel Vanstone was able to raise himself in the chair without assistance: his colour changed again for the better, and his breath came and went more freely.

"How do you feel now, sir?" asked Mrs. Lecount. "Are you warm again, on your left side?"

He paid no attention to that inquiry: his eyes, wandering about the room, turned by chance towards the table. To Mrs. Lecount's surprise, instead of answering her, he bent forward in his chair, and looked with staring eyes and pointing hand at the second bottle which she had taken from the cupboard, and which she had hastily laid aside, without paying attention to it. Seeing that some new alarm possessed him, she advanced to the table, and looked where he looked. The labelled side of the bottle was full in view; and there, in the plain handwriting of the chemist at Aldborough, was the one startling word, confronting them both—"Poison."

Even Mrs. Lecount's self-possession was shaken by that discovery. She was not prepared to see her own darkest forebodings—the unacknowledged offspring of her hatred for Magdalen—realised as she saw them realised now. The suicide-despair in which the poison had been procured; the suicide-purpose for which, in distrust of the future, the poison had been kept, had brought with them their own retribution. There the bottle lay, in Magdalen's absence, a false witness of treason which had never entered her mind—treason against her husband's life!

With his hand still mechanically pointing at the table, Noel Vanstone raised his head, and looked up at Mrs. Lecount.

"I took it from the cupboard," she said, answering the look. "I took both bottles out together, not knowing which might be the bottle I wanted. I am as much shocked, as much frightened, as you are."

"Poison!" he said to himself, slowly. "Poison locked up by my wife, in the cupboard in her

own room." He stopped, and looked at Mrs. Lecount once more. "For *me*?" he asked, in a vacant, inquiring tone.

"We will not talk of it, sir, until your mind is more at ease," said Mrs. Lecount. "In the mean time, the danger that lies waiting in this bottle, shall be a danger destroyed in your presence." She took out the cork, and threw the laudanum out of window, and the empty bottle after it. "Let us try to forget this dreadful discovery for the present," she resumed; "let us go down stairs at once. All that I have now to say to you, can be said in another room."

She helped him to rise from the chair, and took his arm in her own. "It is well for him; it is well for me," she thought, as they went down stairs together, "that I came when I did."

On crossing the passage, she stepped to the front door, where the carriage was waiting which had brought her from Dumfries, and instructed the coachman to put up his horses at the nearest inn, and to call again for her in two hours' time. This done, she accompanied Noel Vanstone into the sitting-room, stirred up the fire, and placed him before it comfortably in an easy-chair. He sat for a few minutes, warming his hands feebly like an old man, and staring straight into the flame. Then he spoke.

"When the woman came and threatened me in Vauxhall Walk," he began, still staring into the fire, "you came back to the parlour, after she was gone; and you told me——?" He stopped, shivered a little, and lost the thread of his recollections at that point.

"I told you, sir," said Mrs. Lecount, "that the woman was, in my opinion, Miss Vanstone herself. Don't start, Mr. Noel! Your wife is away, and I am here to take care of you! Say to yourself, if you feel frightened, 'Lecount is here; Lecount will take care of me.' The truth must be told, sir—however hard to bear the truth may be. Miss Magdalen Vanstone was the woman who came to you in disguise; and the woman who married to you in disguise, is the woman you have married. The conspiracy which she threatened you with in London, is the conspiracy which has made her your wife. That is the plain truth. You have seen the dress up-stairs. If that dress had been no longer in existence, I should still have had my proofs to convince you. Thanks to my interview with Mrs. Bygrave, I have discovered the

house your wife lodged at in London—it was opposite our house in Vauxhall Walk. I have laid my hand on one of the landlady's daughters, who watched your wife from an inner room, and saw her put on the disguise; who can speak to her identity, and to the identity of her companion, Mrs. Bygrave; and who has furnished me, at my own request, with a written statement of facts, which she is ready to affirm on oath, if any person ventures to contradict her. You shall read the statement, Mr. Noel, if you like, when you are fitter to understand it. You shall also read a letter in the handwriting of Miss Garth—who will repeat to you personally, if you like, what she has written to me—a letter formally denying that she was ever in Vauxhall Walk, and formally asserting that those moles on your wife's neck, are marks peculiar to Miss Magdalen Vanstone, whom she has known from childhood. I say it with a just pride—you will find no weak place anywhere in the evidence which I bring you. If Mr. Bygrave had not stolen my letter, you would have had your warning, before I was cruelly deceived into going to Zurich; and the proofs which I now bring you, after your marriage, I should then have offered to you before it. Don't hold me responsible, sir, for what has happened since I left England. Blame your uncle's bastard daughter, and blame that villain with the brown eye and the green!"

She spoke her last venomous words as slowly and distinctly as she had spoken all the rest. Noel Vanstone made no answer—he still sat cowering over the fire. She looked round into his face. He was crying silently. "I was so fond of her!" said the miserable little creature; "and I thought she was so fond of Me!"

Mrs. Lecount turned her back on him in disdainful silence. "Fond of her!" As she repeated those words to herself, her haggard face became almost handsome again in the magnificent intensity of its contempt.

She walked to a bookcase at the lower end of the room, and began examining the volumes in it. Before she had been long engaged in this way, she was startled by the sound of his voice, affrightedly calling her back. The tears were gone from his face: it was blank again with terror when he now turned it towards her.

"Lecount!" he said, holding to her with both hands. "Can an egg be poisoned? I had an egg for breakfast this morning—and a little toast."

"Make your mind easy, sir," said Mrs. Lecount. "The poison of your wife's deceit, is the only poison you have taken yet. If she had resolved already on making you pay the price of your folly with your life, she would not be absent from the house while you were left living in it. Dismiss the thought from your mind. It is the middle of the day; you want refreshment. I have more to say to you, in the interests of your own safety—I have something for you to do, which must be done at once. Recruit your strength, and you will do it. I will set you the example of eating, if you still distrust the food

in this house. Are you composed enough to give the servant her orders, if I ring the bell? It is necessary to the object I have in view for you, that nobody should think you ill in body, or troubled in mind. Try first with me before the servant comes in. Let us see how you look and speak, when you say, "Bring up the lunch."

After two rehearsals, Mrs. Lecount considered him fit to give the order, without betraying himself.

The bell was answered by Louisa—Louisa looked hard at Mrs. Lecount. The luncheon was brought up by the housemaid—the housemaid looked hard at Mrs. Lecount. When luncheon was over, the table was cleared by the cook—the cook looked hard at Mrs. Lecount. The three servants were plainly suspicious that something extraordinary was going on in the house. It was hardly possible to doubt that they had arranged to share among themselves the three opportunities which the service of the table afforded them of entering the room.

The curiosity of which she was the object did not escape the penetration of Mrs. Lecount. "I did well," she thought, "to arm myself in good time with the means of reaching my end. If I let the grass grow under my feet, one or other of those women might get in my way." Roused by this consideration, she produced her travelling-bag from a corner, as soon as the last of the servants had left the room; and seating herself at the end of the table opposite Noel Vanstone, looked at him for a moment, with a steady investigating attention. She had carefully regulated the quantity of wine which he had taken at luncheon—she had let him drink exactly enough to fortify, without confusing him—and she now examined his face critically, like an artist examining his picture, at the end of the day's work. The result appeared to satisfy her; and she opened the serious business of the interview on the spot.

"Will you look at the written evidence I mentioned to you, Mr. Noel, before I say any more?" she inquired. "Or are you sufficiently persuaded of the truth to proceed at once to the suggestion which I have now to make to you?"

"Let me hear your suggestion," he said, sullenly resting his elbows on the table, and leaning his head on his hands.

Mrs. Lecount took from her travelling-bag the written evidence to which she had just alluded, and carefully placed the papers on one side of him, within easy reach, if he wished to refer to them. Far from being daunted, she was visibly encouraged by the ungraciousness of his manner. Her experience of him informed her that the sign was a promising one. On those rare occasions when the little resolution that he possessed was roused in him, it invariably asserted itself—like the resolution of most other weak men—aggressively. At such times, in proportion as he was outwardly sullen and discourteous to those about him, his resolution rose; and in proportion as he was considerate and polite, it fell.

The tone of the answer he had just given, and the attitude he assumed at the table, convinced Mrs. Lecount that Spanish wine and Scotch mutton had done their duty, and had rallied his sinking courage.

"I will put the question to you for form's sake, sir, if you wish it," she proceeded. "But I am already certain, without any question at all, that you have made your will?"

He nodded his head, without looking at her.

"You have made it in your wife's favour?"

He nodded again.

"You have left her everything you possess?"

"No."

Mrs. Lecount looked surprised.

"Did you exercise a reserve towards her, Mr. Noel, of your own accord?" she inquired, "or is it possible that your wife put her own limits to her interest in your will?"

He was uneasily silent—he was plainly ashamed to answer the question. Mrs. Lecount repeated it in a less direct form.

"How much have you left your widow, Mr. Noel, in the event of your death?"

"Eighty thousand pounds."

That reply answered the question. Eighty thousand pounds was exactly the fortune which Michael Vanstone had taken from his brother's orphan children at his brother's death—exactly the fortune of which Michael Vanstone's son had kept possession, in his turn, as pitilessly as his father before him. Noel Vanstone's silence was eloquent of the confession which he was ashamed to make. His doting weakness had, beyond all doubt, placed his whole property at the feet of his wife. And this girl, whose vindictive daring had defied all restraints—this girl, who had not shrunk from her desperate determination even at the church door—had, in the very hour of her triumph, taken part only from the man who would willingly have given all!—had rigorously exacted her father's fortune from him to the last farthing; and had then turned her back on the hand that was tempting her with tens of thousands more! For the moment, Mrs. Lecount was fairly silenced by her own surprise; Magdalen had forced the astonishment from her which is akin to admiration, the astonishment which her enmity would fain have refused. She hated Magdalen with a tenfold hatred from that time.

"I have no doubt, sir," she resumed, after a momentary silence, "that Mrs. Noel gave you excellent reasons why the provision for her at your death should be no more, and no less, than eighty thousand pounds. And, on the other hand, I am equally sure that you, in your innocence of all suspicion, found those reasons conclusive at the time. That time has now gone by. Your eyes are opened, sir—and you will not fail to remark (as I remark) that the Combe-Raven property happens to reach the same sum exactly, as the legacy which your wife's own instructions directed you to leave her. If you are still in any doubt of the motive for which she married you, look in your own will—and there the motive is!"

He raised his head from his hands, and became closely attentive to what she was saying to him, for the first time since they had faced each other at the table. The Combe-Raven property had never been classed by itself in his estimation. It had come to him merged in his father's other possessions, at his father's death. The discovery which had now opened before him, was one to which his ordinary habits of thought, as well as his innocence of suspicion, had hitherto closed his eyes. He said nothing—but he looked less sullenly at Mrs. Lecount. His manner was more ingratiating; the high tide of his courage was already on the ebb.

"Your position, sir, must be as plain by this time to you as it is to me," said Mrs. Lecount. "There is only one obstacle now left, between this woman and the attainment of her end. *That obstacle is your life.* After the discovery we have made up-stairs, I leave you to consider for yourself what your life is worth."

At those terrible words, the ebbing resolution in him ran out to the last drop. "Don't frighten me!" he pleaded; "I have been frightened enough already." He rose, and dragged his chair after him round the table to Mrs. Lecount's side. He sat down, and caressingly kissed her hand. "You good creature!" he said, in a sinking voice. "You excellent Lecount! Tell me what to do. I'm full of resolution—I'll do anything to save my life!"

"Have you got writing materials in the room, sir?" asked Mrs. Lecount. "Will you put them on the table, if you please?"

While the writing materials were in process of collection, Mrs. Lecount made a new demand on the resources of her travelling-bag. She took two papers from it, each endorsed in the same neat commercial handwriting. One was described as "Draft for proposed Will," and the other, as "Draft for proposed Letter." When she placed them before her on the table, her hand shook a little; and she applied the smelling-salts, which she had brought with her in Noel Vanstone's interests, to her own nostrils.

"I had hoped, when I came here, Mr. Noel," she proceeded, "to have given you more time for consideration, than it seems safe to give you now. When you first told me of your wife's absence in London, I thought it probable that the object of her journey was to see her sister and Miss Garth. Since the horrible discovery we have made up-stairs, I am inclined to alter that opinion. Your wife's determination not to tell you who the friends are whom she has gone to see, fills me with alarm. She may have accomplices in London—accomplices, for anything we know to the contrary, in this house. All three of your servants, sir, have taken the opportunity in turn of coming into the room, and looking at me. I don't like their looks! Neither you nor I know what may happen from day to day—or even from hour to hour. If you take my advice, you will get the start at once of all possible accidents;

and, when the carriage comes back, you will leave this house with me!"

"Yes, yes!" he said, eagerly; "I'll leave the house with you. I wouldn't stop here by myself for any sum of money that could be offered me. What do we want the pen and ink for? Are you to write, or am I?"

"You are to write, sir," said Mrs. Lecount. "The means taken for promoting your own safety are to be means set in motion, from beginning to end, by yourself. I suggest, Mr. Noel—and you decide. Recognise your own position, sir. What is your first and foremost necessity? It is plainly this. You must destroy your wife's interest in your death, by making another will."

He vehemently nodded his approval; his colour rose, and his blinking eyes brightened in malicious triumph. "She shan't have a farthing," he said to himself, in a whisper—"she shan't have a farthing!"

"When your will is made, sir," proceeded Mrs. Lecount, "you must place it in the hands of a trustworthy person—not my hands, Mr. Noel; I am only your servant! Then, when the will is safe, and when you are safe, write to your wife at this house. Tell her, her infamous imposture is discovered—tell her you have made a new will, which leaves her penniless at your death—tell her, in your righteous indignation, that she enters your doors no more. Place yourself in that strong position, and it is no longer you who are at your wife's mercy, but your wife who is at yours. Assert your own power, sir, with the law to help you—and crush this woman into submission to any terms for the future that you please to impose."

He eagerly took up the pen. "Yes," he said, with a vindictive self-importance, "any terms I please to impose." He suddenly checked himself, and his face became dejected and perplexed. "How can I do it now?" he asked, throwing down the pen as quickly as he had taken it up.

"Do what, sir?" inquired Mrs. Lecount.

"How can I make my will, with Mr. Loscombe away in London, and no lawyer here to help me?"

Mrs. Lecount gently tapped the papers before her on the table with her forefinger.

"All the help you need, sir, is waiting for you here," she said. "I considered this matter carefully, before I came to you; and I provided myself with the confidential assistance of a friend, to guide me through those difficulties which I could not penetrate for myself. The friend to whom I refer, is a gentleman of Swiss extraction, but born and bred in England. He is not a lawyer by profession—but he has had his own sufficient experience of the law, nevertheless; and he has supplied me, not only with a model by which you may make your will, but with the written sketch of a letter which it is as important for us to have, as the model of the will itself. There is another necessity waiting for you, Mr. Noel, which I have not mentioned yet—but which is no

less urgent in its way, than the necessity of the will."

"What is it?" he asked, with roused curiosity.

"We will take it in its turn, sir," answered Mrs. Lecount. "Its turn has not come yet. The will, if you please, first. I will dictate from the model in my possession—and you will write."

Noel Vanstone looked at the draft for the Will and the draft for the Letter, with suspicious curiosity.

"I think I ought to see the papers myself, before you dictate," he said. "It would be more satisfactory to my own mind, Lecount."

"By all means, sir," rejoined Mrs. Lecount, handing him the papers immediately.

He read the draft for the Will first, pausing and knitting his brows distrustfully, wherever he found blank spaces left in the manuscript to be filled in with the names of persons, and the enumeration of sums bequeathed to them. Two or three minutes of reading brought him to the end of the paper. He gave it back to Mrs. Lecount without making any objection to it.

The draft for the Letter was a much longer document. He obstinately read it through to the end, with an expression of perplexity and discontent which showed that it was utterly unintelligible to him. "I must have this explained," he said, with a touch of his old self-importance, "before I take any steps in the matter."

"It shall be explained, sir, as we go on," said Mrs. Lecount.

"Every word of it?"

"Every word of it, Mr. Noel, when its turn comes. You have no objection to the will? To the will, then, as I said before, let us devote ourselves first. You have seen for yourself that it is short enough and simple enough for a child to understand it. But if any doubts remain on your mind, by all means compose those doubts by showing your will to a lawyer by profession. In the mean time, let me not be considered intrusive, if I remind you that we are all mortal, and that the lost opportunity can never be recalled. While your time is your own, sir, and while your enemies are unsuspecting of you, make your will!"

She opened a sheet of note-paper, and smoothed it out before him; she dipped the pen in ink, and placed it in his hands. He took it from her without, speaking—he was, to all appearance, suffering under some temporary uneasiness of mind. But the main point was gained. There he sat, with the paper before him, and the pen in his hand; ready at last, in right earnest, to make his will.

"The first question for you to decide, sir," said Mrs. Lecount, after a preliminary glance at her Draft, "is your choice of an executor. I have no desire to influence your decision—but I may, without impropriety, remind you that a wise choice means, in other words, the choice

of an old and tried friend whom you know that you can trust."

"It means the admiral, I suppose?" said Noel Vanstone.

Mrs. Lecount bowed.

"Very well," he continued. "The admiral let it be."

There was plainly some oppression still weighing on his mind. Even under the trying circumstances in which he was now placed, it was not in his nature to take Mrs. Lecount's perfectly sensible and disinterested advice without a word of cavil, as he had taken it now.

"Are you ready, sir?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Lecount dictated the first paragraph, from the Draft, as follows:—

"This is the last Will and Testament of me, Noel Vanstone, now living at Baliol Cottage, near Dumfries. I revoke, absolutely and in every particular, my former will executed on the thirtieth of September, eighteen hundred and forty-seven; and I hereby appoint Rear-Admiral Arthur Everard Bartram, of St. Crux-in-the-Marsh, Essex, sole executor of this my will."

"Have you written those words, sir?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Lecount laid down the Draft; Noel Vanstone laid down the pen. They neither of them looked at each other. There was a long silence.

"I am waiting, Mr. Noel," said Mrs. Lecount, at last, "to hear what your wishes are, in respect to the disposal of your fortune. Your *large* fortune," she added, with merciless emphasis.

He took up the pen again, and began picking the feathers from the quill in dead silence.

"Perhaps, your existing will may help you to instruct me, sir," pursued Mrs. Lecount. "May I inquire to whom you left all your surplus money, after leaving the eighty thousand pounds to your wife?"

If he had answered that question plainly, he must have said, "I have left the whole surplus to my cousin, George Bartram"—and the implied acknowledgment that Mrs. Lecount's name was not mentioned in the will, must then have followed in Mrs. Lecount's presence. A much bolder man, in his situation, might have felt the same oppression and the same embarrassment which he was feeling now. He picked the last morsel of feather from the quill; and, desperately leaping the pitfall under his feet, advanced to meet Mrs. Lecount's claims on him of his own accord.

"I would rather not talk of any will, but the will I am making now," he said, uneasily. "The first thing, Lecount—" He hesitated—put the bare end of the quill into his mouth—gnawed at it thoughtfully—and said no more.

"Yes, sir?" persisted Mrs. Lecount.

"The first thing is—"

"Yes, sir?"

"The first thing is, to—to make some provision for You?"

He spoke the last words in a tone of plaintive interrogation—as if all hope of being met by a magnanimous refusal had not deserted him, even yet. Mrs. Lecount enlightened his mind on this point, without a moment's loss of time.

"Thank you, Mr. Noel," she said, with the tone and manner of a woman who was not acknowledging a favour, but receiving a right.

He took another bite at the quill. The perspiration began to appear on his face.

"The difficulty is," he remarked, "to say how much."

"Your lamented father, sir," rejoined Mrs. Lecount, "met that difficulty (if you remember) at the time of his last illness?"

"I don't remember," said Noel Vanstone, doggedly.

"You were on one side of his bed, sir; and I was on the other. We were vainly trying to persuade him to make his will. After telling us he would wait, and make his will when he was well again—he looked round at me, and said some kind and feeling words which my memory will treasure to my dying day. Have you forgotten those words, Mr. Noel?"

"Yes," said Mr. Noel, without hesitation.

"In my present situation, sir," retorted Mrs. Lecount, "delicacy forbids me to improve your memory."

She looked at her watch, and relapsed into silence. He clenched his hands, and writhed from side to side of his chair, in an agony of indecision. Mrs. Lecount passively refused to take the slightest notice of him.

"What should you say——?" he began, and suddenly stopped again.

"Yes, sir?"

"What should you say to—a thousand pounds?"

Mrs. Lecount rose from her chair, and looked him full in the face, with the majestic indignation of an outraged woman.

"After the service I have rendered you to-day, Mr. Noel," she said, "I have at least earned a claim on your respect—if I have earned nothing more. I wish you good morning."

"Two thousand!" cried Noel Vanstone, with the courage of despair.

Mrs. Lecount folded up her papers, and hung her travelling-bag over her arm in contemptuous silence.

"Three thousand!"

Mrs. Lecount moved with impenetrable dignity from the table to the door.

"Four thousand!"

Mrs. Lecount gathered her shawl round her with a shudder, and opened the door.

"Five thousand!"

He clasped his hands, and wrung them at her in a frenzy of rage and suspense. "Five thousand," was the death-cry of his pecuniary suicide.

Mrs. Lecount softly shut the door again, and came back a step.

"Free of legacy duty, sir?" she inquired.

"No!"

Mrs. Lecount turned on her heel, and opened the door again.

"Yes!"

Mrs. Lecount came back, and resumed her place at the table, as if nothing had happened.

"Five thousand pounds, free of legacy duty, was the sum, sir, which your father's grateful regard promised me in his will," she said, quietly. "If you choose to exert your memory, as you have not chosen to exert it yet, your memory will tell you that I speak the truth. I accept your filial performance of your father's promise, Mr. Noel—and there I stop. I scorn to take a mean advantage of my position towards you; I scorn to grasp anything from your fears. You are protected by my respect for myself, and for the Illustrious Name I bear. You are welcome to all that I have done, and to all that I have suffered in your service. The widow of Professor Lecompte, sir, takes what is justly hers—and takes no more!"

As she spoke those words, the traces of sickness seemed, for the moment, to disappear from her face; her eyes shone with a steady inner light; all the woman warmed and brightened in the radiance of her own triumph—the triumph, trebly won, of carrying her point, of vindicating her integrity, and of matching Magdalen's incorruptible self-denial on Magdalen's own ground.

"When you are yourself again, sir, we will proceed. Let us wait a little first."

She gave him time to compose himself; and then, after first looking at her Draft, dictated the second paragraph of the will, in these terms:

"I give and bequeath to Madame Virginie Lecompte (widow of Professor Lecompte, late of Zurich) the sum of Five Thousand Pounds, free of Legacy Duty. And, in making this bequest, I wish to place it on record that I am not only expressing my own sense of Madame Lecompte's attachment and fidelity in the capacity of my housekeeper, but that I also believe myself to be executing the intentions of my deceased father, who, but for the circumstance of his dying intestate, would have left Madame Lecompte, in *his* will, the same token of grateful regard for her services, which I now leave her in mine."

"Have you written the last words, sir?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Lecount leaned across the table, and offered Noel Vanstone her hand.

"Thank you, Mr. Noel," she said. "The five thousand pounds is the acknowledgment on your father's side of what I have done for him. The words in the will are the acknowledgment on yours."

A faint smile flickered over his face for the first time. It comforted him, on reflection, to

think that matters might have been worse. There was balm for his wounded spirit, in paying the debt of gratitude by a sentence not negotiable at his banker's. Whatever his father might have done—he had got Lecount a bargain, after all!

"A little more writing, sir," resumed Mrs. Lecount, "and your painful, but necessary, duty will be performed. The trifling matter of my legacy being settled, we may come to the important question that is left. The future direction of a large fortune is now waiting your word of command. To whom is it to go?"

He began to writhe again in his chair. Even under the all-powerful fascination of his wife, the parting with his money on paper had not been accomplished without a pang. He had endured the pang; he had resigned himself to the sacrifice. And, now, here was the dreaded ordeal again, awaiting him mercilessly for the second time!

"Perhaps it may assist your decision, sir, if I repeat a question which I have put to you already," observed Mrs. Lecount. "In the will that you made under your wife's influence, to whom did you leave the surplus money which remained at your own disposal?"

There was no harm in answering the question, now. He acknowledged that he had left the money to his cousin George.

"You could have done nothing better, Mr. Noel—and you can do nothing better now," said Mrs. Lecount. "Mr. George and his two sisters are your only relations left. One of those sisters is an incurable invalid, with more than money enough already for all the wants which her affliction, allows her to feel. The other is the wife of a man, even richer than yourself. To leave the money to these sisters is to waste it. To leave the money to their brother George, is to give your cousin exactly the assistance which he will want, when he one day inherits his uncle's dilapidated house, and his uncle's impoverished estate. A will which names the admiral your executor, and Mr. George your heir, is the right will for you to make. It does honour to the claims of friendship, and it does justice to the claims of blood."

She spoke warmly—for she spoke with a grateful remembrance of all that she herself owed to the hospitality of St. Crux. Noel Vanstone took up another pen, and began to strip the second quill of its feathers, as he had stripped the first.

"Yes," he said, reluctantly; "I suppose George must have it—I suppose George has the principal claim on me." He hesitated: he looked at the door, he looked at the window, as if he longed to make his escape by one way or the other. "Oh, Lecount," he cried, piteously, "it's such a large fortune! Let me wait a little, before I leave it to anybody!"

To his surprise, Mrs. Lecount at once complied with this characteristic request.

"I wish you to wait, sir," she replied. "I have something important to say, before you add another line to your will. A little while since,

I told you there was a second necessity connected with your present situation, which had not been provided for yet—but which must be provided for, when the time came. The time has come now. You have a serious difficulty to meet and conquer, before you can leave your fortune to your cousin George."

"What difficulty?" he asked.

Mrs. Lecount rose from her chair, without answering—stole to the door—and suddenly threw it open. No one was listening outside; the passage was a solitude, from one end to the other.

"I distrust all servants," she said, returning to her place—"your servants particularly. Sit closer, Mr. Noel. What I have now to say to you must be heard by no living creature but ourselves."

SMALL-BEER CHRONICLES.

THE duties of a Small-Beer Chronicler are very various, and so numerous, that the present Chronicler sometimes despairs of finding time to do them any sort of justice. The vats are filling, and running over continually, before he can get a chance of registering their contents. And yet with all this work on his hands he must needs go out of his way in the very last chronicle which issued from his pen, and enter on a field of labour to which he has no call whatsoever. Let him now promptly get back to his own business, and chronicle some very small beer indeed, which will not bear any longer to be kept waiting.

Among all the changes of modern times there are few more remarkable than those which have taken place in our small-talk. The whole style of conversation is changed. The subjects of conversation and the manner of talking. "Sir," Dr. Johnson remarked once, of a long conversational evening, "Sir, we had good talk." In that "good talk" how many subjects were treated. Religion, politics, philosophy, literature, and many other topics! All sorts of purely abstract questions were introduced and argued earnestly, and sometimes even hotly. "Now, sir, with regard to the good or evil of card-playing?" would be the commencement of a conversation. "What, sir, is your opinion of the practice of duelling?" would be a question heralding a discussion two hours long, which would terminate, perhaps, in a purely practical solution of the question. This was the "good talk" of which the men of that day were fond.

But without going back to times even so remote, without even taxing the memory of our oldest acquaintances, may not any man who has spent even five-and-thirty years "crawling between earth and heaven," and who has during the early part of his career been tolerably observant of what went on around him—may not such an one remember a time when conversation was very different indeed from what it is in our own immediate day? In the dark ages, when the present century was fat, fair, and forty, there

was still some of that "good talk" left of which Johnson was fond. Then, and still more a few years earlier, it was yet the custom to start a topic and discuss it. How warmly, too, men would talk and argue about things which they had no concern with. What political strife there was. What violence of party feeling. What Tories, Whigs, and Radicals there were in those days. What exciting debates in the Houses of Parliament. What exciting debates on those debates in private circles. A man would cut off his son with a shilling, or become estranged from his friend, on a purely public question, and because the son or the friend would not agree with him about Reform, or Catholic Emancipation.

There were professed talkers in those days: men who were celebrated for their conversational powers, and who rounded their sentences handsomely, and raised their voices at the periods: men whom other men were invited to meet, simply that they might hear them talk. Conversation Sharp lived then, and talked his way to a glory not now to be attained by any amount of dinner-table eloquence. And many others there were who earned that same prefix to their names, and who now would probably be stigmatised as "bores" before they had got half way through their first preparatory sentences. It must have been a curious career that of one of these professed conversationalists, and one requiring no small amount of labour and study. Surely, he must have had to stick to his newspaper in the morning with a different pertinacity to that which most readers bring to bear upon the sheet. He could not give himself up to an unfettered enjoyment of the news, dodging about among the paragraphs, here and there as he felt disposed, revelling in police reports, battenning on horrors, as the ordinary reader does. On the contrary, he must have said to himself, "I dine at Prosehampton to-day with the Tympanums, what will it be necessary for me to get up—how shall I make my effects?" Thus a great strain was upon the conversationalist, even in his moments of leisure; when arrived at the scene of display, the trouble must have been greater still. How difficult it must have been for him to remember the houses at which a certain favourite sentence had been let off; how hard to have a new audience all but one man perhaps, and to be obliged on his account to forego a piece of eloquence which would have been quite new and fresh to the rest of the company; how terrible, when once launched in a sea of oratory, to catch some sceptical eye which said, as plainly as eye could speak—"My very dear sir, I think we have heard all this before."

It must have been a severe trial to both parties, when two of these professed talkers met in society. If Conversation Sharp went out to dinner and found himself at the same table with Conversation Blunt, what must his sensations have been? What must Sharp have felt when he heard Blunt at the other end of the table

talking on his (Sharp's) favourite topic. And what agony it must have been to Blunt, in his turn, to listen while Sharp was letting off an effective story which Blunt had that very morning routed out of an old book of French memoirs.

Besides the big talk of Conversationalists Sharp and Blunt, and the stories related by professed raconteurs, there were other after-dinner stories, which used, some few years since, to go the round of the dinner-table with the decanters. "Did you ever hear the story," the host of the evening would say, "of the old Scotch doctor and his servant?" "No, what was that?" returns some hypocrite who knows the anecdote by heart. And then the master of the feast goes on to tell how the old physician was entertaining a company of friends at dinner, how he sent his servant-boy to fetch one last bottle of most especial port, how on the boy's appearing with it, the doctor asks in an agony, "Have you shook that wine, Jock?" and how Jock, misled by the wording of the question, and thinking that he has omitted an important ceremony, replies, "Na, sir, but I wool," and forthwith treats the bottle to a most vigorous shaking then and there. Anecdotes such as this used to be part of the dessert. They are now almost as obsolete as the "good talk" of the days of Johnson.

And not alone these changes in our modern conversation have I to chronicle. What has become of the Wit, the Satirist? The mantle that sat on the shoulders of Rogers, of Sydney Smith, of Jerrold, on whom has it descended? A man may bore his company now with some long story about his escape from a certain danger, or his recovery from some tremendous fever, but when he comes to the crisis, "I really thought I should die," there is no Rogers to give a low groan, and say, parenthetically, "Why didn't ye?" The Bore enthusiastic, too, who has a great deal to say about a certain opera he heard in Italy, may now with perfect impunity assure his audience that there is one particular tune in it which quite "carries him away;" for there is no Jerrold to look quietly round the company, and ask, "Can nobody whistle it?"

When Sydney Smith went out to dinner, it is said that the moment of his arrival could be detected because the servants were heard laughing as he came through the hall and ascended the staircase. When the gates of Holland Park opened to receive his stalwart form, or to let in the chariot through whose windows might be seen the pale visage of Rogers, men knew that an event of public importance was coming off. A sort of congress of wit was assembling. In time, the results of that meeting would come out, and the best part of the talk would soon be public property. The retorts courteous and the quips modest which such assemblies brought out, were quite a staple commodity of the day.

We have no Conversation Sharps now. Men known out of their own immediate circles for their wit in talking, are scarce. There are plenty of brilliant entertainments given, and

plenty of houses which people move heaven and earth to get into; but it is not because they have the reputation of being frequented by such company as used to be got together in the days of old Holland House. The dinner-table is a republic now, and the autocrats who used to rule it have resigned their sway, or are gone to sit at that festive board to which Hamlet despatched Polonius. The average of social ability has most likely become higher. With this, there goes a great want of veneration. All sorts of men now examine, and carp at, everything that is said; and if there be any flaw or weak point in what a man asserts, it is pounced upon. This makes our talkers nervous. It is probable that the best things of the professed wits, whose talk we have been occupied with just now, survived alone, and that the same evening which gave birth to those successful retorts, produced also a good amount of nonsense, of indifferent humour, and incorrect statement. Our best brains are like this. The head which gave Falstaff's fun to the world issued pages of "chaff" and laboured jesting at which one cannot smile. And so it may have been with these tongue-geniuses. They felt they carried their audience with them, and talked confidently: as an actor sure of applause performs better than he who acts to a cold "house."

There are few indulgent audiences now. There are few blind admirers. The age is cool, clever, unenthusiastic, critical; and a man is obliged to be so cautious in his talk lest he should make some mistake, or lay himself open to correction or ridicule, that he speaks in fettered accents, and revenges himself by lying in wait for the next speaker. The young men of this day do not make a pleasant audience. They are social free-thinkers. They take nothing for granted, have little respect for age, defy the superstitions of the period before them, and talk, themselves—with considerable accuracy of statement and confidence of manner—and this is rather trying to some of their elders. These last have gone through a bitter time when they themselves were young. Many has been the conversation which, at that time, they have sat and listened to, but in which their voices were not heard. While they so refrained, they were buoyed up by the thought that the day would come when a slight grizzled tint in their whiskers, and a thinness of hair about their temples, would entitle them, too, to hold forth, and when the young members of society would listen. Alas! they have reached the glories of grizzled whiskers, and time has shaved a symmetrical tonsure-circle on the tops of their heads, but has the other desirable consummation been attained too? Not a bit of it. The wind has dropped just as they were going to take advantage of it. The manners of the time have changed, and the young men on whom our middle-aged friend had calculated as a silent and awe-struck audience, themselves make the best of the running. This is hard. It is hard to be interrupted by a young rascal of

two-and-twenty who has sat coolly listening to your statement, who contradicts you before the assembled company, and who (confound his impudence!) is right in his facts. Facts are what are wanted now. The lighter qualities of wit, fancy, and eloquence are at a discount, and the man who has been knocking about the town with his ears open, with the last information from the clubs, the last news of the moment, is the man who prospers best at the dinner-table.

And, now-a-days, nobody is ever wrong. There are comparatively no representatives of that section of society which used to exist, and which took up untenable ground, and tried to sustain a falling side. This is very satisfactory, no doubt. It shows indisputably how wise we have all grown, how widely information is disseminated, and generally what an enlightened age we live in. Still, it is not amusing. To take a case. Suppose that the recent Garibaldi excitement had occurred years ago. There would have been found some wrong-headed individual in society who would have taken his part, gone with him through thick and thin, and who, when beaten out of every rational stronghold in which he sought refuge, would have ended by affirming stoutly, "Well, I don't care what you say, he's a fine enthusiastic fellow, and if I had been in his place I would have done just the same."

This sustainer of wrong opinions, this devil's advocate, this occupant of the opposition benches in our social parliament, hardly exists among us. He is better away, no doubt; but still he made talk. Of that same Garibaldian question, how very little has been said among us, considering the importance of the subject. One opinion—the right one, that Garibaldi has made a mistake—has been subscribed to. The verdict has been unanimous. There has been no dissentient jury-men to hold out and oppose it. This is an age that cares no more for enthusiasm than it does for eloquence. Judiciousness, prudence, crafty statesmanship, it approves of. Heart is out of fashion. There is no sympathy for righteous indignation. The age is a cool age, and sympathises with coolness.

It being the case, then, that our modern conversation is not on great topics and abstract questions, as in the days of Burke and Johnson; it being tolerably certain that wit and repartee are no longer the order of the day, boring convivial stories being disposed of, and argument being at an end because society is so much of the same opinion; it remains to ask what manner of talk has taken the place of the old system of conversation, and how we wisecracks of this day keep the ball going at all, and rescue our host and hostess from the misery of presiding at a speechless meal?

Bradshaw is a great subject. It is wonderful, on certain occasions, to observe how very telling is a profound knowledge of the works of that author. The movements of the age are so rapid and so numerous, that it is not uncommon when some new people arrive at a country-house, for the conversation to turn immediately on the

pros and cons connected with their getting away, and straightway one is in for "loop-lines" and "branches," and trains that stop and trains that don't stop, for half an hour together. As to the extent to which folks of another class talk about railways, it is something perfectly prodigious, and assuredly worthy of chronicling. Go down to the north by the line which suits you best, wait at a junction for a short time, and then tell me how much of the conversation to which you listened in the carriage, or which was being kept up among the other passengers waiting at the station, was on other subjects than railways. "I understand that that Boiler and Buster Line is open at last," remarks hard-headed gentleman No. 1 to hard-headed gentleman No. 2. "Ah," replies No. 2, "I should be sorry to have shares in it. A friend of mine had some concern with the party that did most of the legal work connected with that business, and he says it was the veriest job from beginning to end that he ever heard of." "Line wasn't wanted, eh?" "Wanted? No. Why, now, take a similar instance; look at that Sterril Valleys Branch of the Great Beastern. Disgraceful, from beginning to end." "Sir Robert Acres had a good deal to do with that, hadn't he?" "Yes, I should think he had. The line came through his property; a parcel of nasty sour land it was, precious little good to anybody. Well, what do you think, now, he got from the company?" &c. &c.

Then there is the discontented talk about railways, which is by no means uncommon. "What time are we due at Spindon?" says a gentleman, holding a penny newspaper in his hand, and having always before him the column devoted to commercial news. "2.35," replies another gentleman, with another penny newspaper also folded with a view to the money article. "Why, it's 2.48 now," says the first speaker. "2.48! of course it is. Who ever knew this line punctual? I've travelled by it now regularly for six years, and I never knew a train come in to its time yet." "What time does the express pass?" "Well, it ought to pass at 2.57, but it's always behind time. We shall be shunted off presently to let it go by." "Ah, it's shameful such want of punctuality. It's easy enough to keep time if they try. Now look at that other line, the South-Northern, they're just as remarkable the other way. If you see one of their trains go by you, you can tell what o'clock it is to half a minute without looking at your watch." "The Smashem and Donefor line is very unpunctual," puts in a new speaker, who has been—degraded wretch—reading a periodical in which there are works of fiction and other un-practical matters. But the line alluded to leads to the Continent, so neither of the commercial gentlemen has anything more to say than "Ah, I don't know that part of the country." And this is said contemptuously. For, your purely commercial man, who is always travelling about the northern and midland counties, looks upon all other parts of the world with scorn, and regards those persons

who frequent regions south of the metropolis with the pity he bestows upon a wretch weak enough to buy a novel or admire the scenery out of the carriage window.

As to the talk of men in general, in this country, it is almost confined to one subject, or rather one range of subjects, on which, if a man be ignorant, woe to him! If it should happen that owing to some peculiarity in his bringing up, or in the circumstances connected with his early life, an English gentleman has reached years of discretion without having mastered all the mysteries connected with guns, dogs, horses, and fishing-rods, I would seriously counsel him to adopt straightway one of two courses. I would recommend him either to convey himself and his effects with all speed across the British Channel with the purpose of settling in some foreign land; or else, if he hold strongly to his native country, and have a sufficient fund of energy to carry him through, I would advise him to devote a season to retirement and Scotland, there to place himself under professional hands, and endeavour by earnest study to supply the deficiencies of his neglected education. There is no place in this country for men who are different from their fellows. It is fortunate that our national idea of a man's education is so good and sensible an one as it is, for we will admit of no deviation from it. These things are indispensable: you must have been to a public school, after that, unless a military career was to be yours, you must have gone to college. In the holidays you must have jumped upon the back of every unbroken horse that came in your way, and sustained all sorts of tumbles and other accidents. All through your boyhood and youth you must have been sworn friends with the game-keeper, and perhaps the rat-catcher as well. You must have got rid—if you ever had such a weakness—of all feeling of pity for the sufferings of the brute creation, and be able to superintend without a particle of compunction the torturing of worms, weasels, fishes, hares and foxes, and the feathered creation generally. Later in your career you must have mastered rowing, billiard-playing, and the colouring of short pipes. Thus educated, you are fit for general society, and general society will be glad to receive you. Yes. "SPORT" is the subject in which it behoves a man to be up. If that wise man who said that we were a nation of shopkeepers, had known a little more of our social life, I think he would have altered one word in his *not*, and called us a nation of *game-keepers*.

The talk of the day, among men generally, is about sport, and things belonging to sport: "Who's got that moor of Lord Blackcock's this year?" "Why, of all the fellows in the world, that man, what's his name, near-sighted fellow, Molecutter." "Molecutter! Why, he can't shoot a bit. Give you my word, I went out with him, for a whole season, and—" "I say, Splint, what's become of that mare of yours? Last time I saw you, you were talking of selling her." "Oh,

I got rid of her, or at least my groom did, rather well." "Nice mare." "Well, you know, she was, and she wasn't. Sometimes, you know, she was very well, and when she was in the humour, and that sort of thing, it was all very comfortable; but I've known that mare, when she was in the tantrums, you know, and that sort of thing, I've known her kick straight out for ten minutes on end, so that no fellow on earth could sit her." "How did you get rid of her?" "Oh, my man, you know, he's a sort of shrewd, don't you see, fellow, and he got hold of some City fellow, I fancy—timid fellow, too, mind ye, but the mare was in a good humour, and—"

"Twenty-two pounds four ounces, and a fish in better condition you never clapped eyes on."

"Well, it may be my fancy, but I never care for the salmon in that river, neither for sport when you're catching them, nor yet for flavour as to eating. The Dee, you know, is the river for me." "Ah! I can't agree with you there. The Dee is a good river, and it's more particularly a good grilse and trout river; but it's not my idea of a salmon river. Now, I'll tell you: I was over in the early part of last season in Ireland, and of course I had a good deal of fishing, well—" "So Molecutter says, you know, coming poking up in his blind way, and holding the bird about a quarter of an inch from his nose, 'My bird, I think?' 'Well, you know,' I said, 'I *did* think that I shot it.' 'Oh no,' says Molecutter, with a sort of polite grin, 'I assure you I picked him out especially.' You can't dispute such a thing, you know, with a man on his own moor, so of course I let him have it that it was so; but I tell you solemnly, it's my firm belief that that man has never hit a bird in his life, and what's more, that he never will; yet he's the man who is always talking about the thing, and no moor is good enough for him."

"Well, I wanted to get on one horse out of that stable for the Cesarewitch, but somehow or other no distinct bet was made about it. In my own mind, I believe the older horse will show them the trick yet." "Not a bit of it; and I'd recommend you strongly to back the other. I have an informant who's on the spot, and he tells me, beyond a doubt, that there's been some queer work going on in that stable, and that he thinks the best way is to give the whole concern a wide berth. Why, the very last time that—"

"Yes, as you say, that kennel-lameness is a deuce of a thing, and when once it appears you're a lucky man if you get rid of it. That's one of the provoking things, you know, about that sort of shooting. A fellow takes the place, you know, without seeing it; is told that it's all right, and that sort of thing, and then he goes down with dogs that he's paid no end of money for, and well-trained dogs too, and then you find a kennel not fit to put a pauper in. It's too bad. There you are with your dogs laid up in a regular—" "Well, now you mention it, I have observed that a breech-loader does not always seem to hit so hard as the old muzzle-loader. I'll

give you an instance. The other day, down at Slaughterfield, we'd all been shooting, you know, for some days, and we were all deucedly tired, and the dogs rather knocked up, you know; so we thought we'd have a rest, and to fill up the time, you know, we got up a pigeon-match. We all shot with breech-loaders, except one fellow, Stickleback—you know Stickleback—fellow who's all for the old style of thing in everything. Well, Stickleback shot with a muzzle-loader, and I must acknowledge that he killed his birds cleaner than we did. Whilst our birds were walking about the field, hit, you know, and that sort of thing, but not dead (some of them dying a minute or two afterwards, and so on), Stickleback's birds would drop like stones, and never move again. We were all a good deal struck at the time by it, and it was impossible not to attribute the thing, in some degree, to the different way of loading."

Therefore I say, that unless you wish very often to have to sit and drink your wine in silence, shut out from sympathy, and association with your fellow-men, it does behove you to get up some sort of knowledge of the sports of the field, and to know accurately a grilse from a salmon, and a grouse from a wood-pigeon. I dare say there are other things talked about besides those alluded to in the specimen dialogue given above; I dare say there are scientific sets where science is talked of, and art circles where art is discussed, and medical coteries in which physic predominates, and clerical meetings where the progress of school-children and the respective merits of pews and open-sittings come upon the carpet. But what I maintain is, that all these are exceptional cases, and that the surest passport into a general society of men which you can show, is a game certificate; and that to be quite at home in the drawing-room, it is above all things necessary that you should be at home in the kennel and stables.

And this small chronicle of small conversations, how incomplete it will seem without some mention of the kind of talk which goes on among the ladies of the creation while their lords are occupied with the wild and domesticated animals who live under their protection! Unhappily, I am not in a position to Chronicle Small-Beer of this tap, as accurately as I could wish. Undoubtedly it is my privilege occasionally to engage in conversation with members of the fairer part of creation, and so it may be said that I ought to be able to put their talk on record. I am of a different opinion. It is not what these gentle creatures say to us men that we want to know, but what they say to each other. I have shown what men talk about when the ladies' backs are turned; but how can I find out what ladies say when they leave their masters over the bottle. I have tried to find this out in every sort of way, but have never yet been able to get hold of one of that masonic sisterhood who is disposed to turn Queen's evidence upon the rest. Now, from this I find myself irresistibly impelled

towards one of two conclusions—the dilemma being exactly of the Freemasonic kind—either the secret of these evening meetings is of a very terrible kind, or else there is no secret at all.

Perhaps they talk of mankind. Perhaps they are perpetually occupied in discoursing with wonder and admiration of our virtues, our long-suffering, our cleverness, our largeness of grasp, our indifference to the gratifications of the table, our wondrous readiness to part with our money, our amiability under misfortunes connected with the laundry department. Perhaps they plot little pleasant surprises for us—small, or, better still, great economies, domestic treats. Perhaps they examine each other as to how far the mind of each is "subdued to the very quality of her lord."

Of the conversation of the ladies of that older period mentioned in the beginning of this Chronicle, we have some knowledge from contemporaneous records, but even that is almost exclusively mixed conversation; talk between some witty lady and some satirical gentleman; a keen encounter of wits, but not what we are in search of. No one tells us what the talk of these same witty ladies was, when they got together.

There's no getting at it. Past or present that Privy Council of the drawing-room remains a mystery. I have, in fulfilment of my Small-Beer functions, and in the harmless endeavour to supply the public thirst for such tittle, gone the length of rigidly cross-examining one witness whom I had a right so to pump; but I could get at nothing. Did they talk about servants? No. About children? No, scarcely ever. About dress? Oh dear no. One lady might say to another what a beautiful colour that Chinese shawl of yours is, or something of that sort, but nothing more. So here were all one's superstitions knocked on the head at once. If ever I build a house of my own, I will have an œil de bœuf cunningly let into the wall of the drawing-room, somewhere near the chimney-piece, and solve this mystery. I have tried listening already. A Small-Beer Chronicler must listen and do all sorts of mean things, and once, when some friends of mine were dining with me, and the ladies having retired some time, I went to the cellar for some more of my celebrated '34 claret, I paused as I passed the drawing-room door, and I distinctly heard the words "crinoline," "small flounces," "ruche," and "trimming." The connecting links between these remarkable expressions I could not catch; but this is quite enough to convince me that one part of the evidence of the witness whom I cross-examined is not to be received.

I have once or twice listened in another manner, which I strongly recommend to future Small-Beer Chroniclers. I have drawn near to a group of ladies in a drawing-room, and, singling out an elderly and garrulous member of that coterie, have led her on to tell me a long story, or to engage in some protracted statement which required only monosyllabic answers. Then, as I balanced my teaspoon on the edge of my cup,

appearing lost in that pastime and in attention to my aged friend—then I fell to listening with a forty-housemaid power to the chat that was going on around me. It was on such an occasion that I heard a matron of many years' standing give the benefit of her advice and experience to one considerably her junior. She concluded with these words: "Show a proper pride and confidence in yourself, dear, and you'll very soon bring him down to his right position."—Words which, when I heard, a wild giddiness came over me, the room swam round, my teaspoon crashed to the ground, my cup followed suit, and a new breadth became necessary in the dress of the old lady with whom I had been apparently engaged in conversation.

Not half of what I have got to say concerning our modern ways of talking, and the changes that have come over our manners in this respect, have I been able to set down here. The subject is a very important one speaking from a Small-Beer point of view, and it is by no means impossible that I may return to it on a future occasion, if events will only wait a little, and give me time to look about me. It is a terrible office this. At this moment, while I write, there is small-beer working and seething at Edinburgh, fermenting over the very edges of the vats, about the Sunday question; and at the same time there is a perfect flood of small-beer fizzing and bubbling and alarmingly "up," in Hyde Park, and all about the Pope—fancy even the smallest of beer being turned sour when *he* makes faces!—all these things want to be chronicled and that speedily, but how is one pair of hands to do it all?

TRANSITION-TIME.

LEAF-LADEN slide the yellow streams,
With gout of blood the ribbed oak teems;
The season breathes like one in dreams.

Like one that sleeps disturbed, and sees,
Through crossed and knotted forest trees,
Vague faces white with mysteries.

The mossy boles have gathered eyes,
That gloat with meanings wondrous wise,
And prophecies of changing skies;

And as the black leaf strikes the swarth,
A wind rolls down the quiet earth,
Through all its measures, south and north;

Blows up the roof, and whirls the vane,
Knocks at the topmost lattice-pane,
And then dies off in slanting rain.

The season in its trances hears
Vast voices in the atmospheres,
Low wailings by the brooks and meres.

And, when the Day and Night make feud,
Hears, in a dun, unconscious mood,
Brown Autumn pacing in the wood.

Ah, well I know his harvest head,
It sowed the furrows poppy-red,
And burnt the orchards till they bled;

Till the full-fruited apple groaned,
The violet plum was amber-stoned,
And, from the wall, the peach-bough moaned.

He comes across the foggy flats,
'Mid creakings of the cider vats,
Between the twilight and the bats.

The latest bird that Summer leaves
Flies upward from the beaten sheaves,
And sings its terrors in the eaves.

For when the moon leans flushed and round,
Half level with the reaping ground,
In a thin sear of vapour wound;

And slantward all the hedges lie
Along the stubbles crisp and dry,
Like brown paths dwindling to the sky;

The season of Transitions wakes,
The berry blackens in the brakes,
The long reed crackles in the lakes;

A blast swirls upward from the shore,
And smites the sighing sycamore,
Cleaving the chestnut to the core.

The chimneys quake, and roars affright;
And eastward, lightnings thin and white
Peel down the drizzling front of night.

Then one who hearkens by the blind,
May hear, in echoes ill defined,
The minster bells swung in the wind:

Whilst all the forests, east and west,
Filled with the presence of the guest,
Clutch at the stars in dark unrest.

The season dreams. Ah, yet a while,
The beech may wear a fretted smile,
Nor see the snow-plague blot the tile;

Or, in the privet's scarlet blaze,
The robin chirp in gusty lays
Traditions of the summer days.

The changes hasten, swift and soon:
From yonder elm, his latest boon,
The black rook clamours at the moon.

And by the fagots on the hearth,
The cricket with no voice of mirth,
Ticks the transitions of the earth.

ON THE ROAD TO PERSIA.

THE cost of the mere necessities of life in Central Asia is very small; but it does not, therefore, follow that the expenses of an European will be even moderate. Everything he requires is of course dear in proportion to its scarcity and the distance from which it has to be brought. If this be true for an European resident in Central Asia, it is still more true for a traveller. In Europe, a man can take a knapsack or a leather bag, step into a railway train, and flit about from city to city with a mere change of clothing, certain never to want for anything as long as he has money. But in Central Asia he must carry all the necessities of civilised life about with him, or prepare to do without them.

The traveller in Central Asia requires a tent for himself, and at least two more for his servants. He will be fortunate if he can buy these tents from somebody wishing to sell them, for fifty pounds English money. He will want bullock-trunks, water-casks, canteen (it is advisable to buy cooking utensils in copper: not only because

they are less likely to breakage, but because they may be re-sold by weight, without loss, when done with), saddle-bags, saddles, bridles, and horse-furniture for himself and his servants. He must carry provisions, wine, and sometimes even forage for his cattle. What with dragoman, cook, muleteers, tent-pitchers, guards, grooms, and hangers-on, he will be lucky if he have less than a dozen people about him. Most of these people must be clothed for the journey, and must receive at least a month's wages in advance. Servants engaged in Turkey to travel to Persia insist upon their return expenses being paid; for no Turk could obtain employment, or live in security in Persia, where he would be looked upon as an unclean heretic. Then, when the traveller has clothed these troublesome servants, and advanced them wages, he will find that they are most of them in some scrape. One, owes money to a man who will not let him go till he pays it; another, must leave money for the support of a wife and family, who appear to have come to him by enchantment; for, when engaged, he declared himself to be a bachelor; a third, has a brother in prison; a fourth, is in prison himself; a fifth, has changed his mind, and won't go at all, disappears with clothes and wages at the eleventh hour, and a new man, for whom fresh clothes and wages must be found, is to be got to replace him; a sixth is ill, and only to be cured by money; a seventh has lamed himself and his horse, and must be left behind, and is never more heard of; an eighth refuses to sign the contract; a ninth signs it, but afterwards comes to a wrangle about it, and ends the dispute by hiding himself five minutes before you start; a tenth declares that he can only go one day's journey; the eleventh and twelfth strike for double wages.

To be sure these wages are not very high, and the clothes required by Eastern servants do not cost much; but they cost something. Perhaps the outfit and advance given to a servant will average three pounds per head. His horse will cost eight or ten pounds; a saddle, bridle, and the rest of it, two pounds more; and this mounts up to a round sum in the end. The number of horses and baggage-mules will vary according to circumstances. I had nine baggage-mules; a gentleman with whom I travelled had forty. About two shillings per day per mule is a fair price for hire. We had the greatest difficulty in procuring mules, however, and were detained many days at Trebizond, Erzeroom, and Talreez, in consequence. The extortions and cruelties practised on the muleteers by the native governments render them extremely unwilling to have anything to do with persons likely to apply for the aid of the authorities in any difficulty. Within the last few years, in consequence of the wars in Turkey and Persia, and the disturbed state of the roads, the hire of mules is more than doubled. They are miserable half-starved animals, usually covered with galls and sores. The roads over which they travel, being such as nature made, they can seldom accomplish more than fifteen or twenty miles daily.

Once on the road with bag and baggage, it is almost impossible to calculate the expenses of an European traveller. In the first place, his servants are certain to lie and boast about him for their own glorification. The authorities of remote places are ignorant of any difference in rank among Europeans, and generally suppose a travelling Frank to be an ambassador. Thus at nearly every village through which we passed in Persia, a cow or a sheep was killed as a sacrifice when we entered it. All the inhabitants turned out to meet us, and frequently as many as fifty horsemen escorted us for miles on either side, discharging their fire-arms and exhibiting feats of daring. The chief of these always expected a present in accordance with his rank. Some trinket would often satisfy the chief, but his troopers and inferiors had to be paid in money. At night, wherever we encamped, the chief inhabitants of the place sent us presents of tea, sugar, fruit, honey, and sweetmeats. These gifts were so numerous as to become a very expensive mark of honour, for each gift was brought to us by a different servant, and every servant expected a present at least equal in value to the gift he brought. It would have been considered highly offensive to slight these demonstrations of good will. Everything supplied to a traveller is charged, therefore, not in accordance with its value, but in accordance with his supposed rank; and he is expected to give liberal presents to all the ragamuffin crowd, who collect wherever his tents are pitched. The total absence of hotels, the universal custom of giving money to the servants of the host of the night whenever the traveller halts in any considerable city; the almost incredible number of servants kept by official personages, and that class with whom a traveller is brought in contact; the systematic speculations of his own followers, who cannot be checked nor controlled in their accounts by reason of the total ignorance a traveller is necessarily in, as to the prices of every commodity in a place where he remains but a few hours; the constant pilfering of idlers about the tents; the troublesome and expensive practice of giving presents and offerings to a traveller twenty times a day, so that he cannot pass near a corn-field or an orchard without being stopped to give money for a few ears of wheat or an apple; the privileged dervish who cannot be refused, and who seizes the traveller's bridle-reins, shouting, "Hoo! Hak!" with the contortions of a madman till satisfied; the crowd of other beggars, sacred and profane; the necessity of buying a whole sheep for a single dinner; the need of purchasing even water in many places; the extortions of muleteers, who will stop in the centre of a range of mountains and insist on money before moving another step; the exactions of leaders of guards, and cavasses, who press for money with an importunity that no coolness nor management can disconcert;—all these things may convey some idea of a few of the items which swell the traveller's accounts. Travelling may have been cheaper in past times.

It may be still cheap for natives of these countries, and for persons long inured to extreme hardship, or for young men indifferent to privations. But the effects of the late war, the liberal scale of expenses of the Turko-Persian frontier commission, and the frequent recent intercourse with Europeans, have very much increased the cost of everything. Wood is excessively dear all along the road from the practice of cutting down trees for fuel wherever they are to be found, and never planting.

Wherever we pitched a tent, the owner of the land came to demand compensation for the injury which he declared done to his property. These claims were frequently absurd, but not always so, for we travelled in harvest time, and, for safety, were obliged to pitch our tents in the neighbourhood of some village. Our famished mules may have often eaten up some corn. About ten shillings a night may be reckoned as the average cost of our tenting-ground and water. In the neighbourhood of large towns the expenses were greater.

There is still another reason which makes an accurate calculation of the real expense of a journey, absolutely impossible: that is, the impudent fraud practised by bankers and money-changers, with the large variation in the value of the same coins at places but a few hours' distance from each other. Then, when a piece of money is changed, the nominal value given for it by no means represents the real one. The change is made up of Russian coins, Turkish coins, Persian coins, Indian coins, French coins, and Spanish dollars—all clipped, sweated, and defaced, almost beyond recognition. These again bear a value differing in every town and village. In some places all payments appear to be made in kind. The people are ignorant of every other use for gold money than as an ornament for the hair; and the few silver coins they possess, are hung upon the bridles of their horses.

I felt very much like a boy going back to school after the pleasantest midsummer holidays possible, on the morning that we were to start from Trebizond to Persia. I had been living with a delightful family of English people for some three weeks, waiting for news of the last warlike movements upon the frontier; and at last, on the evening previously, a courier had galloped in all dusty and travel-stained with intelligence which decided our journey. So there we were, assembled for the last time round the hospitable breakfast-table of my host. The tablecloth was as white as snow, a fresh-gathered nosegay bloomed on the table, happy faces were round it, and this was the last we were to look upon of civilisation for one while. Nothing could be nicer than the slices of fried turbot caught a few hours before, and the pilaff of quails which had fattened among the autumn corn-fields; nothing could look more wholesome and tempting than the jolly English ham and corned beef upon the sideboard; and the tea was from Russia, fragrant and costly. But this was the only morning on which I failed to do

justice to the good cheer, rendered better by the cordial welcome and kind smiles of my host and hostess. How well I remember the tinkling of the mule-bells, and how each vibration seemed to echo in my heart, making it duller and duller; and how wistfully I looked through the open windows round which the creepers clustered all in flower, and thought uncomfortably of the preparations for departure which were going on outside! Indeed, my host protracted them as long as possible. He had always some prudent thought for me, or some kind last intention to fulfil; but everything comes to an end at last, and towards the afternoon nothing more could possibly be done for us, and we were obliged to acknowledge that we were ready. I am not quite sure that I could see my hostess and the children very well, as we said "Good-by," or how it was that I found myself cantering up the "azure hill" to catch the caravan; but thus much was certain—I was fairly on my way for a journey in Central Asia.

It was some time before we could see the caravan winding through the woodlands in the distance, and my host—an old traveller who had insisted upon accompanying me the first few miles—was good enough to turn the time to account by giving me a little parting advice.

"You will find it cold," said he, "in the mornings and evenings; and cold in these countries is dangerous; take care, therefore, never to allow yourself to get chilled. The natives of these districts wear fur till the middle of June. Europeans who come here dress themselves, I don't know why, usually in all sorts of flimsy summer clothes, and this is why they so often get ill: the fact being that the climate is really severe. Should you, in spite of precautions, find yourself chilled, take a little cold brandy-and-water, enough to warm you, immediately. Absinthe is a good thing if taken in moderation, especially when you camp in marshy or thickly-wooded places. There is a great deal of difference between the use and the abuse of spirits, and I am convinced that when employed moderately they are very wholesome indeed in these countries. As a rule, live well, eat a fair quantity of meat during the day, and not too much fruit; take a glass of wine or two with your dinner—sherry is best, and you have a sufficient stock with you for the journey. If you get wet, change your clothes as soon as possible. Indeed, my advice to you may be easily summed up in a couple of maxims, which you must take care to remember: 'Do not catch cold,' and 'do not get wet.'"

When this brief lecture came to a close we had reached a pretty shaded hollow near a rivulet, and there my host had determined to take leave of me. His servant was already established there, with luncheon and a bottle of champagne for a parting health, all ready spread upon the trunk of a fallen tree. The champagne, I have no doubt, made our parting gayer than it otherwise would have been, and I recollect we shook hands with tolerable jollity when I turned to wander over the hills

and far away; but I looked back often, to see my host's trim well-built figure go bounding along, and watched him with straining eyes till his figure gradually disappeared.

There winds our caravan in the distance, about a mile ahead! It seems an immense train for so small a party to move about with; for we are only two simple squires, a lady and two children; yet we have between us been obliged to employ a string of mules and horses that stretches half across the valley.

We have nothing more than necessities, but it is astonishing how numerous the necessities of civilised life are, and what an awful burden they are to carry about. For instance, tents are necessary to the comfort and health of travellers through districts where no houses are to be found, often for a long day's journey. Even where it would be possible sometimes to reach a village by going a few hours' ride out of the direct road, it is not certain that a Christian traveller would be well received; and if he did succeed in obtaining admission to the house of some Mussulman less fanatic than usual, he would find it so thickly infested with vermin, and so foul with filth of every kind, that he would soon wish himself out of it again. Besides, the chances of catching the plague are not yet quite reduced to nothing in Central Asia, and a member of the small-pox family is always a permanent resident in every place where a few houses undrained and unventilated can be huddled together to poison the earth and air.

I think, therefore, we may really agree to consider tents as necessities. Then we have a portable kitchen, consisting of some half-dozen copper pans of different diameters, fitted so as to pack one upon the other, the bottom of each pan being a trifle smaller than the brim of its predecessor, and made so as to fit neatly into it, and save space. All the pans are fastened together by two copper side pieces, and a lid. They serve us, both for saucepans and larder. Then we have a copper teakettle, bright with long and meritorious service, a frying-pan, a gridiron, and a tin teapot. A large pair of Russian leather saddle-bags make one fair horse-load. These, being proof against rain, will preserve the clothes and books, which we wish to keep accessible, from injury during the journey. We have also two round covered boxes, each resembling a peck measure. These boxes are divided into small compartments. In one is a tea-set, and in the other are plates, spoons, knives, and forks. The plates are of copper, well tinned over, that they may not poison our food. Two or three pieces of oilcloth, and as many small carpet rugs to spread in our tents at night, complete our outfit for a pic-nic which is to last some months.

Our tents and bedding made seven horse-loads. A servant rode upon the Russian saddle-bags; our tea and table sets arranged in their cases, the portable kitchen and the cooking utensils, were placed in a deep basket covered with a coarse hair bag. This basket, and another protected in the same way, containing groceries,

formed another horse-load. We also took with us a tak-ter-wan, or litter for a lady, and two cajavals for some children who accompanied us.

Two hundred and eighty pounds' weight is the maximum load for a single horse, divided into two equal parts, and placed in long narrow deal boxes. These are attached by ropes, and slung one on each side of the horse, resting and riding snugly against his broad pack-saddle.

Of the three roads which lead to Erzeroum we chose the eastern, as at least a day shorter than the middle and western routes; but it is more rough, and until lately was frightfully beset by hordes of marauding Laz. We ascended the lofty Bas-Tapa by a steep rocky zig-zag path, which was partially paved and cut from the rocks into stairs. As we reached the top, some clouds which had hung over the landscape dispersed, and the surrounding country disclosed a scene of almost unequalled beauty and grandeur. We looked back and feasted our eyes for a while, sadly reluctant to take our last view of the Euxine, and wondering whether we should ever see it again. For my part, I am so used to the sea-view from my open windows, and so wedded to the sense of liberty it inspires—perhaps by the constant coming and going of vessels trading to distant countries—that I always feel imprisoned when away from it.

Passing across the Bas-Tapa, and a lower ridge beyond, we descended into the deep narrow valley of Mill River by a difficult rocky pass. We followed up this valley in a south-east direction, through a constant succession of the rarest charms of rural loveliness. Mountains rose high on either side; small but beautiful fields lay along their declivities, stretching up to their tops, and extending down to the river's edge, except where they were interrupted by steep precipices that left scarcely a bridle-path for the traveller: while the neat shingled cottages of the dwellers among the rocks hung romantically along the upper cliffs, or were perched on the brink of the stream below. The inhabitants of this and the neighbouring valleys are Laz and Greeks.

Our caravan passed cheerfully along, the bells on our horses jingling musically, and the muleteers singing low chanting songs, and entertaining each other with marvellous narratives. Much in the same way as we were travelling then, the old Crusaders rode to Palestine. We reached Javislik, a village about twenty miles from Trebizond, and pitched our tents about eight o'clock in the evening. We soon made fires and got tea. Then, as we were listening to the roaring of the stream within a few feet of us, the aga, or governor of the district, sent us a guard of armed men to protect our tents by night.

Daylight revealed to us the little village of Javislik, sparkling all over with dewdrops. It is the first station from Trebizond, and consists of about twenty houses. We could find nothing in the way of refreshment there, but a little sour milk. We were glad to ride on, and we soon began to ascend the Kara-Kapan. The weather was cloudy, with slight rains. As we advanced, we

found ourselves enveloped in a dense fog, until we came upon the top of a narrow ridge of mountains, with almost unfathomable depths on either side, which were now and then imperfectly revealed as the clouds were partially driven away by the wind. It was bitterly cold as we mounted higher, and we had a constant change of climate in different altitudes, and spots exposed or sheltered; spring, summer, winter, and autumn, succeeded each other by turns before we reached the plains again. The sides of the mountains were clothed with heavy timber, the last we were to see for many hundreds of miles. The lofty beech and cedar were predominant, and one of the most common bushes of the undergrowth was that from whose blossom is extracted the honey mentioned by Xenophon as poisoning some of his troops. It is a bush which bears a watery excrecence about as large as an apple. The flower from which the intoxicating honey is extracted, has a pale yellow colour, and is something like our honeysuckle. It was on the Kara-Kapan, too, that we saw the last of the butterflies. I do not remember ever to have met any in Persia. It was late in the afternoon when we reached the village of Kara-Kapan, which is nearly five thousand feet above the level of the Black Sea. It consists only of five or six rude huts, built mainly for the accommodation of travellers and caravans, and is upon the extreme summit of the mountain.

In the course of the afternoon the clouds cleared partially away, and opened to us scenes of inconceivable sublimity. We found ourselves near the top of a lofty mountain, where we could scarcely find a spot level enough to pitch our tents, surrounded by deep gulfs and snow-capped summits. Part of the mountain sides and valleys below, were buried in thick clouds driven furiously about by the wind. When they broke away, the waters of the Black Sea at length appeared in the distant horizon, and the countless cottages of the Laz and Greek peasants lay sprinkled like birds'-nests in the open fields, and even among the trees of the forests, all along the declivities and ravines. We were charmed with the beauties and awed by the grandeur of the scene around us.

The travelling was, however, terribly bad, and our horses were quite knocked up. The latter part of the road for some miles, was all over felled trees laid crossways over a narrow path, with a fearful precipice on one side, down which a false step would infallibly have hurled us. The downward road was easier, but still dangerous and difficult. At the foot of the mountain is the beautiful village of Armoot, famous for its fruit; shortly afterwards we passed Tekel, which is the ancient Teches or Tesqua, the mountain from whose summit Xenophon and his enraptured troops caught their first glimpse of the Euxine.

In about ten days we got by easy stages from Trebizond to Erzerroom. It was a lovely summer morning when we rode down into the vast plain in which is situated the capital of Armenia. The rich verdure about the marshes

was covered with dewdrops, and our horses showered diamonds about them at every step. The plain, nearly thirty miles in length, still lay between us and the city, stretching away in an easterly direction. Snowy mountains encompassed it on all sides, and the western branch of the river Euphrates meanders through its centre. Here and there were scattered some peasants at work in the fields. They were all armed to the teeth, and ready for fighting at any time. They looked more like banditti than husbandmen.

Leaving the caravan, we wandered along the banks of the Euphrates after wild-ducks, and shot an immense number of them. I never saw so many water-fowl together; they flew in clouds over our heads, and covered the waters far and near when they settled. Strange to say, our shots did not disturb them, or if now and then a flock which had lost half a dozen of its plumpest members rose screaming into the air and wheeled away at an immense height out of the range of our guns, we were sure to find as large a flock a few yards further on.

We encamped in the evening near some natural hot springs, said to be an infallible cure for more than half the ills that flesh is heir to, and we sent on a messenger to announce our arrival to our friends in the city, as we were rather too formidable a company to arrive unexpectedly.

We might have saved our messenger this journey had we noticed a very Turkish-looking party encamped a little way off. But in our simplicity we never dreamed that these could be our friends and countrymen, as it turned out they were. We did not imagine that European settlers in the interior of Turkey soon become, at least in appearance, far more Turkish than the Turks themselves. For whereas the Turkish population are always trying to introduce what they consider European improvements into their dress and manners, Europeans more sensibly prefer the ancient usages and ways which have been sanctioned by ages of experience, and which are generally more in conformity with the climate and necessities of the country. We had not been long encamped before we received a visit from these neighbours, who showed us great kindness, and we passed the evening very pleasantly together, talking over the last news from Europe. We found our visitors mostly men of great local information and attainments, who were generally much occupied with researches in Oriental literature and antiquarian discovery. When they went away, it was late, and I walked out for half an hour before my tent, to take leave of the moon, which was at the full, and spread a solemn spiritual lustre over the great plain and the surrounding mountains. The evening star shone brightly in the west, the bat flittered hither and thither, and thousands and thousands of frogs croaked their night-songs in the marshes.

Erzerroom stands on a moderate elevation at the eastern extremity of the great plain which we crossed in approaching it. It is a very ve-

nerable city, one of the oldest in the world, situated at the base of the Ararat mountain range, near the head-waters of the Euphrates, and it was founded, as tradition says, by a grandson of Noah. It is the Arz or Arza of ancient times, which took the affix "room" from its belonging at one period to the Greek Empire of Room, thus becoming Erzerroom. It figures largely in Armenian history; having for some time been the capital of that ancient kingdom. It contains at present about thirty-five thousand inhabitants, who are principally Turks, most of the Armenians having emigrated to Georgia at the time of the Russian invasion. The city has seventy fine streets, running in various directions, which are broad for an Asiatic city, but very filthy; and each street has its mosque and lofty minaret, from whose tops the "Muezzins" summon the "Faithful" five times a day to the devotions of the Prophet. I do not recollect to have heard the call to prayer at ten o'clock A.M., or at four o'clock P.M., so regularly given in any other Mohammedan city. Its houses are generally built of earth, with occasional square sticks of timber in the walls to give them support, though many are built of fine hewn stone. There are some remains of an ancient wall and fosse around the city; but only the citadel is at present fortified, and this is said to be the work of the adventurous Genoese. The appearance of Erzerroom is very sombre and uninviting, and, from its great elevation—five thousand five hundred feet by the barometer, and near seven thousand feet by experiments in boiling water, above the level of the sea—the weather, most of the year, is extremely cold. As a residence it must be dreary, though its climate, almost as a matter of course, is healthy. The city is well supplied with vegetables from gardens near it; but has no fruit, except what is brought a considerable distance from a more temperate region. Its moral aspect struck us as even darker than that of Trebizond, the people appearing still more shy, rude, and degraded.

There are few objects of interest in modern Erzerroom. The principal remnant of antiquity which I observed, is the Jiftch Minereh (pair of minarets), a vast stone building, finely constructed, but now in a dilapidated state, which is supposed to have been originally an Armenian church, subsequently desecrated, as many others have been, by the Mohammedans, and surmounted by them with the two more modern brick minarets, from which it bears its present name. I also visited the largest mosque in the city. It is an immense structure, but exhibits only a mass of dead walls and pillars, with no particular skill or taste displayed in their erection. On the open space east of the city are two circular stone towers of moderate size and height, with conical roofs most admirably constructed, evidently quite ancient, whose origin and use are alike unknown. The commerce of Erzerroom is immense—its local situation being exceedingly felicitous for transit trade. It is the grand thoroughfare between Europe, Asia Minor, and Syria, on the one hand;

and Persia, and, to a considerable extent, Georgia and Mesopotamia, on the other. The city was seriously injured in its commercial, as well as its other interests, by the Russian invasion of 1829.

BONE-MAKING.

IN the year 1736, a London surgeon of the name of Belcher dined with a dyer upon roast pork. When the surgeon had eaten a piece of the pork down to the bone, he was astonished to find the bone coloured red. Asking his host the cause of this extraordinary colour, he was informed that the pigs fed upon the madder refuse which they found cast out from the dye-works, and it dyed their bones, and only their bones. The muscles, the membranes, and even the cartilages, were all of their ordinary colour, but their bones were as red as soldiers' coats. Mr. Belcher, who was an inquiring man, fed a cock upon madder; and when the cock died his bones were found to be red, while his muscles, his membranes, and his cartilages, retained their natural colour. Three years afterwards, Duhamel, the physiologist, repeated and verified the experiment of Belcher. The madder had reddened the bones, but had not coloured the cartilages which were growing into bones. But Duhamel went further. After feeding a pig with madder for some time, he fed it with its ordinary food, and its bones displayed layers of red covered by layers of white; and it was from this experiment that Duhamel learned how the bones grow in thickness by successive layers laid over each other.

But this is not all that happens when bones are growing. No doubt the bones grow in thickness by the superposition of successive layers so regularly, that, by an alternate diet of madder and other food, red and white layers may be made time about, and the time occupied by each ring in growing ascertained exactly; but there is another and a not less curious process going on simultaneously. For our knowledge of this process we are indebted to M. Flourens, who repeated the experiments of Duhamel and Belcher, and carried them much further. Some twenty years ago, M. Flourens found that in proportion as the sides grew by the superposition of external layers, the medullary canal grew by the reabsorption of the internal layers. The red circle begins by being outside; then it is placed between two white rings; and then it becomes innermost; and finally it disappears in its turn. A different series of experiments leads to the same results. A small bit of platina wire being twisted around a bone, after a little time the ring is found inside the layers of bone, and then within the medullary canal. Bones grow thick, it thus appears, by a double process of external superposition and of internal reabsorption; and just as they grow in thickness they grow in length, by layers placed beside each other, or in juxtaposition.

Duhamel held the opinion that a cartilage was a thickened periosteum. Troja found, in

1775, that if the internal membrane, or medullary periosteum, is destroyed, the bone decays away, whilst around this dead and decaying bone the external periosteum forms a new bone. The growth of bone, in fact, is the gradual transformation of membrane into cartilage, and cartilage into bone. By making a hole in a bone, and destroying the internal membrane through it, M. Flourens proved that the external membrane could produce a new bone, the internal membrane of which gradually absorbed the whole of the old bone.

And the practical results of these experiments have been found already to be as beneficent as wonderful. The principles of a new surgery have issued out of them. They have shown the inestimable importance of preserving the membrane which becomes bone, in surgical operations. Complete amputations are becoming more and more rare: extirpations of the injured bones taking the place of them.

Dr. Philipeaux narrates a case which occurred in the practice of M. Blandin. A young man became a patient of the Hôtel Dieu on account of a fistulous wound in the upper and front part of the chest, and in the direction of the left collar-bone. On probing the wound, M. Blandin found that it proceeded from a caries of nearly all the interior half of the bone. Emollients and dissolving pomades having no effect upon the obstinate malady, and the patient growing meagre and resolving to risk the worst, an operation was determined on. Familiar with the results of the physiological experiments of M. Flourens on the periosteum, M. Blandin made up his mind to be guided by them in his surgical operations. He would try his utmost skill to extirpate the decayed bone and preserve the periosteum. He made an incision into the upper surface of the collar-bone, from the middle to the internal or sternal part, at each end of which he made another incision resembling a T with two branches. Then, laying the collar-bone bare without and within, he inserted an instrument made on purpose to protect the periosteum and the soft parts around it. Succeeding in these precautions, he successfully extracted the diseased bone, and disjoined it at its sternal end. Half the collar-bone having been extirpated, the patient begged the surgeon to examine the remaining half, as, if it were tainted, he would prefer losing the whole at once to undergoing another operation. When the surgeon examined the remaining half of the bone, he was obliged to tell the patient that it was seriously attacked by caries, and ought to be extirpated. The remaining half of the collar-bone was extirpated, and thus the whole bone was extirpated. So successfully, however, had the operations been performed, that a short time afterwards the young man left the hospital cured. Eight months later this patient returned to the hospital for another disease, and all the students had opportunities of examining him. A new collar-bone had been made by the periosteum; and this new bone was already almost perfect, and the young man could execute every natural

movement with his arm, nearly as well as ever he could in his life.

Still more marvels. The series of experiments from Beleher to Duhamel, from Duhamel to Troja, and from Troja to Flourens, has been continued by M. Ollier. The periosteum, let us always remember, is the future bone. If healthy, and kept healthy, this membrane will always become a sound bone, in the most unexpected and extraordinary circumstances. M. Ollier took long strips of periosteum, and, twisting it around muscles in different ways, obtained bones of the most curiously various forms: bones in circular forms, bones in spiral shapes, bones even in the figure of eight.

Within three or four days after being cut off, a rag of transplanted periosteum has become bone. A bit of periosteum taken completely away from the bone, and placed under the skin, has ossified, producing bony secretions and tissues. For, the membrane is to the bone, it might almost be said, what the seed is to the plant, and the egg to the animal. Wherever the periosteum can be grafted, there it will become bone. If the membrane of one animal can be grafted upon the tissues of another, it will become bone. And not merely is this true of animals of the same species, this is true of animals of allied species. This sort of grafting succeeds even between chewing and biting animals, such as the rabbit and the dog. Success is almost certain in this strange process of bone-making when the grafting is upon animals of the same species, becoming more and more uncertain, of course, as they recede from each in the web of life.

Wonderful as the story of these discoveries with these applications already is, these interesting and important experiments go on accumulating and culminating in interest and importance. Practical surgeons have heretofore, when trepanning, made but small account of the membrane which is called the dura mater of the brain. M. Flourens, at the head of the physiologists, has held that the dura mater was a periosteum, every membrane which becomes bone being a periosteum. M. Flourens recently took a portion of the dura mater of one animal and put it under the skin of another individual of the same species, and in thirty or forty days afterwards it had become a small bone!

The thrilling story thus told by physiological experiments is confirmed by the representations of the microscope. Under a powerful lens the structure of periosteum and of bone is seen to be identical. Both are nourished by the blood which circulates through canals called the Haversian canals, around which the process of the formation of bone is most active. It is through these canals that the earthy matter precipitated from the blood carries down with it the colouring matter of the madder. And thus ends this narrative. Beginning with a thoughtful surgeon dining on roast pork, it ends—for the present—with young men getting healthy bones instead of damaged ones, and

Science holding up a guiding finger to Skill when touching the brain or seat of Intelligence.

OUR LAST ATTEMPT.

BY A GARIBALDINO.

I. UNDER THE FIG-TREE.

WHEN General Garibaldi landed in Sicily, nothing was less in my mind than any thought of joining him. I was with my mother and sisters, at a villa of my father's, near Corleone, whither we had gone to enjoy the fine mountain air, instead of the hot breezes and scorching sun of the sea-shore. None of my family were what is called Liberals in politics. My father was, and is, a stout adherent of the "Casa di Savoia," and but for his preference to a home life and its cares, might, I believe, have been a Senator of the Kingdom. My mother was one of the ladies of the old Neapolitan court, and so violent in her prejudices towards the successors that none of us ever adverted to political matters before her, well knowing that the presence of strangers or servants would not have restrained her from indiscretion. Time was not, besides, so efficacious as we had hoped in smoothing down these asperities. Indeed, I rather think that she grew more bitter towards "the Piedmontese," as she would call them, every day; and the word "Brigand," applied to the mountaineers in Calabria, was always enough to give her a threat of apoplexy.

If my sisters had any leanings, they were towards my mother's opinions. For these reasons we all of us carefully avoided these vexed questions, and with a true Italian love of quiet, talked of anything rather than public events. Villa life is with us a very monotonous affair. The fattore, or steward, does all that pertains to the estate, employs the peasants, pays them, gathers the harvest, stores and sells it, and gives half to the proprietor; who cannot make the slightest change or suggest the least alteration without being met by the fattore, who will say, "This is no concern of yours. All you have to do is to take your moiety of the receipts, and be off to spend it in Paris or London."

I was not a great reader—few of us young Italians are—and if I had been, there were few books to tempt me at the villa. We had no neighbourhood, we kept no horses but a pair of fat Calabrians for the carriage, the quail shooting had not begun, and, in fact, I was as completely "stranded" as may be, and had it not been for a cigar and a fig-tree, I had been utterly without an object to live for.

This fig-tree—I owe it a mention, since it has already thrown some shadow over my destiny, and may perhaps influence it to the last—grew beside a delicious little rock-well, where even in the hottest days of summer the water was cool and fresh. The overflow of the spring had made for itself a little cleft in the rocky mountain, and ran rippling down into the valley below, like a tiny silk thread, where it ended in

a sort of tank made by the villagers, but religiously limited in its use to drinking.

It was on a very hot afternoon that I had gone down as usual after dinner to eat my figs beside the well, and enjoy the delicious breeze that came up the mountain side and made the large leaves tremble over my head. As I drew nigh the spot, I heard voices talking in tones which assured me that the speakers were Northern Italians.

I crept stealthily on till I was within a few paces of them. I saw three young fellows dressed in scarlet shirts and white trousers, with shiny black leather belts round the waist, and a sort of kepi, or military cap, on the head; the whole not remarkable for cleanliness, but worn and travel-stained. They lay around the well, passing from hand to hand a small drinking-cup of tin, as they made their meal of black bread and the juicy figs of my fig-tree.

"I wonder what they are doing at home," said the youngest, a lad of about sixteen.

"I'll tell you," said another. "Your father is shutting up his shop in the Via del Moro, and going to take his siesta, and mine is standing all shivering with fear in the ante-chamber of the sotto prefetto's office, to assure his eccellenza that he had nothing to do with that scapegrace son of his who has gone off to join Garibaldi, but hopes—if it will be any satisfaction to the monarchy, or to M. Ratazzi—that the rascal will be shot at the first favourable moment."

"And now for Cesare's father," cried the first speaker. "You must not forget him. What is he doing?"

"Oh, Cesare's father is a Duke and a great man. He is addressing the officers of the National Guard, and declaring that there is but one banner in Italy—that of Vittorio Emmanuele. That the Re-Galantuohomo is Allah, and Urbano Ratazzi his prophet."

"Keep your drolleries for the class you are more familiar with, Master Angelo," said a fair-haired handsome fellow, who started up to a sitting position as he spoke. "You are about as fit to read my father's sentiments as to guess what was served him for his dinner to-day."

"Ay, and I'll tell you that, too, if you'll keep your temper," said the other.

"Do, Angelo, by all means, Angelo mio," cried the youngest of the party.

"First, then, there was the minestra—pretty much what your father, Carlino, and mine has, only it was served in silver, and a footman in a fine livery handed the parmesan to season it with. Then came, just as with ourselves, the meat that made it; only that at the Duke's table there were carrots cut like little dice, and turnips made into white roses, and every onion had a sprig of jasmine in it."

"Will you cease this balderdash, Angelo," said the young Duke, laughing, "and talk about something that really concerns us? Have you learned where Cairoly is?"

"At Poggio—at least he will be there to night, and his Picciotti with him."

"I have no fancy for those same Picciotti," said the other; "they are not like the Cacciatori degli Alpi of the first campaign. Oh, if we only had *them* now!"

"Ay, and with them, while you are wishing, Turr, Cosenz, Bixio, and Medici."

"These, or their equals, will never be wanting so long as the good blood of Italy runs hot and strong. Leaders are sure to arrive. What we need is some loud trumpet-blast to awaken our young men of rank and station—fellows who are now lounging ingloriously in dreary old villas, or drearier village cafés, and who, if they but knew that a nation's fate was in the balance, and that a few days must decide whether we were to be a free people or a French province, would come flocking in thousands to our standard. Ay, Angelo, and I say it advisedly, I'd rather see one man of birth and blood with the red shirt on than a whole legion of those ragged creatures who fire when they are startled, and fly when there is an enemy before them."

"Decidedly the Picciotti are not in favour with your eccellenza," said the other, half bitterly. "They possess one merit, however, which your men of gentle blood have not."

"And what may that be?"

"They have come boldly forward and thrown themselves heart and soul, body and bones, into this movement. They have neither asked what the Emperor thought of it or the King. Whether France was opposed or England favoured. They never stopped to inquire whether Ratazzi was in a secret league with Garibaldi, or conspiring to crush him. They merely heard the General declare he was going to Rome, and they cried we will go with you."

"Yes, that is all true; you are right there, Angelo. This is fine of them."

"There is some one in the bushes there, listening to us all this while," cried the youngest, springing to his feet.

It was too late to retreat, and I came forward boldly, told who I was, and owned that I had overheard their conversation. I added, that I regretted I could not offer them the hospitality of the villa, and explained why; but assured them that if they would accept the shelter of the fattore's house for the night, I would take care they should be properly treated, and they might rely upon his discretion if not upon his actual sympathy.

"We would far rather have yours," said Don Cesare, giving me his hand.

I cannot tell what came over me, what process, not of reason, but of impulsion, seized me, but, as I saw myself there in front of a young fellow, my counterpart in years, station, title and fortune, and beheld him ready to risk all, and life besides, in this great enterprise, and then bethought me that while he would be daring all the perils and hardships of a soldier's life, I should be listlessly strolling down to my grassy bench under a fig-tree,—all these, I say, passing hurriedly through my brain, with I know not what besides of shame and self-reproach, I

shook his hand with a vigorous grasp, and said, "Done! I am with you."

It was thus I became a Garibaldian.

II. THE NIGHT AT THE FATTORIA.

HAVING taken care that my guests should be hospitably treated at the fattore's for the night, and despatched thither some bottles of my father's very choicest San Benito, I set about my own especial preparations. I possessed some shirts sufficiently red to be Garibaldian. I had got them for a rowing-club some young Englishmen had established at Palermo. They were very gaudy and bright-coloured, as was the cap that matched them. I had, besides, a good Liège rifle and a revolver, with an abundance of ammunition. I had no sword, but in lieu of one I took a stiletto of great beauty and fine workmanship, which lay on my father's table, the handle of which was incrustated with garnets and turquoise; the belt had been once crimson and gold, and had still sufficient traces left of its former magnificence.

My hardest task of all was yet to come—to break my intention to my family, and tell them whither I had gone. If I wrote one, I wrote a dozen letters; some to my father, some to my mother, to each of my sisters in turn, and, at last, to the family collectively, or rather not addressed at all, but a sort of a general declaration to all whom it might concern. I cannot remember, nor do I want to remember, the words, but the sense of it was this:

"Garibaldi is either right or wrong. If right, every man of honour should be with him: if wrong, against him. I have been neither, and I am very much ashamed of myself in consequence. It is extremely hard to ascertain which is the true state of the case; reading the newspapers will not show it, nor will frequenting the cafés. So that, to solve all doubt, I have resolved to go and see—that is, I have made up my mind to join Garibaldi, and make a campaign with him. By the time it is over, I shall either know more, or care less for it all."

I am free to own that a certain choking in the throat at the thought of leaving my mother and sisters, and my old home, rather led me to throw into this note a sort of bullying indifference which my heart belied most completely; but, as I had pledged my word to go, I would not draw back. I believe if, on arriving at the fattore's, I had heard that my three friends had stolen a march and gone off without me—I believe, I say, I would have given them a heartier blessing than I am in the habit of bestowing in the ordinary course of my daily life. There they were, however, as I entered, at table, the fattore sitting in the room outside, to prevent intrusion, and, if possible, to enforce a slight degree of caution in the matter of cheers and choruses, which the old San Benito had rather promoted than otherwise.

They had a small, ragged, and very dirty map on the table; it was partly spread over a dish of

polenta, and another of carp and olives, which never seemed to distress their sense of table etiquette.

"There," said Angelo, pointing with a dripping fork to a spot on the map. "There's where Menotti's column should be now."

"You know nothing about it," interrupted Cesare. "Menotti will be wherever his father is, and he must be far more to the eastward."

"See! you've spilled the salt on it, unlucky boy," said Angelo to the younger lad; "throw a pinch over your shoulder, left or right, I forget which, and say—what is it they say to conjure away evil?"

"A Credo, isn't it?" cried the boy, eagerly; and now a loud roar of laughter from the others covered him with shame and confusion.

"I always said you were too good for us, Carlino mio," said Angelo; "the frati who brought you up, instilled principles that will have a sore time of it, when it comes to robbing henroosts and other little licences of campaigning life. But here comes our noble host, Don Vincenzio."

"Let there be no 'Dons' between us, comrades," cried I, taking my place. "We will take up our old names when we resume clean linen after the war; till then, perfect equality between us."

"By the keys of St. Peter! this is very strange doctrine," said Angelo, who was now heated with wine, "and not *my* reading of the oracle at all. I thought that it was then the equality was to begin in earnest."

"What do you mean by equality under a monarchy? Is it when we place the crown on the King's head on the Capitol," cried I, "that we are to inaugurate the doctrines of a republic?"

"Viva Garibaldi!" shouted the other, and his friends took up the cry; and we finished the dispute with three hearty cheers.

"Ma, signori! signori mei!" exclaimed the fattore, coming in with clasped hands, and a face pale with terror. "For the Virgin's sake! have some caution. It is true we are all for liberty in our village—all, every man of us—but there are three guardie della sicurezza in the place, who are capable of arresting us all, and sending us to prison."

An honest burst of laughter at this frank confession of village patriotism set us all in good humour at once. Cesare, however, seemed to brood over the fattore's words; for he turned to me some time after, and said, in a low whisper, "Is it not pitiable to think what bad government has made of this people? See, even yet, how the old terror lingers in their veins."

"Will your Excellency please to remember," broke in Angelo, whose quick ear caught everything, "that peasants are not soldiers, and that it is no more *their* business to cut throats, then *ours* to cut barley. If *they* will only give us food, *we* will do the fighting."

"I hope we shall require no such sacrifice from them," replied Cesare; "I trust we mean to pay as we go."

"Of course we do, in Boni de Tresorio; bonds

on the Vatican, payable at sight. Bills at a short date, endorsed by Cardinal Antonelli," said Angelo.

"There's the dawn about to break, signori," said the fattore, timidly; "if you mean to get away without notice, now's your time."

"We want to reach Spedale by the shortest road, can you find us a guide?"

"His Excellency Don Vincenzio knows the country better than any of us," was the answer.

III. THE MARCH WITH THE "PICCIOTTI."

WE started by three o'clock, and at eight, covered something like seventeen miles of ground; not bad marching for men with little practice of walking, carrying heavy knapsacks, and over a mountain track. For the first hour or two we talked a good deal, less on the third, scarcely at all on the fourth, and the fifth we passed in total silence.

"Here's Spedale at last!" cried Angelo, with a hoarse voice, for he was weary, and very thirsty to boot. "We breakfast here, don't we?"

Cesare gave a shrug that might mean assent, or anything else.

"Who is to pay for it?" cried Carlino, laughingly.

"The Dukes, who else?" replied the other. "It is their day now, it may be ours to-morrow."

"Does not all this make you greatly in love with Communism?" asked Cesare of me, with a quiet but severe irony in his tone.

"This is no Communism!" cried Angelo, hastily; "had it been, I'd have changed my rusty old flint-lock for that breech-loader of yours, long ago; or given my spit here for that gorgeous piece of 'virtù' his Excellency sports as a weapon, and which, if he take a friend's advice, he'll not wear when he comes up with the Picciotti."

"An omelette, four fowls, half of a lamb or a kid, she is not sure which, a polenta of maize, and fruit at will; there's a bill of fare for you!" cried Carlino, coming out of a very poor-looking hut, with a withered bough over the door.

"And how came such a glut of delicacies here?" asked I.

"Nullo had ordered them for himself and his staff; and, it seems, the General sent him on another road, and they remain to regale as hungry men."

"Let them serve the meal under this ilex-tree," said Angelo. "We shall be eaten by zanzari if we venture into the miserable den; and, Carlino, see that the old hag does not water the wine; tell her we'll 'lengthen it' for ourselves."

"Tell me if these are not troops at drill in that valley, yonder?" asked Cesare, as he handed me his glass.

"Yes. I can see something like two hundred and fifty or three hundred under arms, but they look mere boys, and are half naked besides."

"Nullo's corps d'élite, as I live!" cried Au-

gelo. "I know the rascals by that black feather in the side of their caps. He recruited them in Palermo, and they say there has not been a pocket picked in the town since they left it."

"Signor Angelo Massari," said Cesare, sternly, "if you cannot find some other butt for your wit than your own comrades, I shall cease to be one of them."

"Don Cesare di Pallodoro!" said the other, as haughtily. "If we are to part company, let it be before I am indebted to you for a breakfast."

I interposed quickly, and by a few well-timed words, established peace between them; a task all the easier that they were both very hungry, and the breakfast had just been served.

I could not help, even in this brief experience of my companions, remarking how social differences became almost impossible obstacles to that spirit of "camaraderie" they affected, but yet could not carry out. The only one of them I felt myself really at ease with, was Don Cesare, and I augured ill from this evidence, as to the working of that Brotherhood they were constantly boasting of. It was not a time, however, for reflection. We descended the mountain after breakfast, and after about an hour's walk, reached the camp of the Picciotti. A nearer inspection of these patriots was not more favourable to them. They were the very dregs of a town population, from the age of fourteen to twenty. They were dirty, ragged, almost barefoot, and unkempt creatures, and yet, let me be just, and own that they showed a marvellous aptitude for soldiery. They handled their weapons skilfully, stood erect, and marched with a sort of loose independent vigour that sat right well on the rascals.

The most ill-favoured of the party was their leader. I do not know his rank, for they called him indiscriminately captain, major, and colonel, and one urchin, of about twelve years old, addressed him, with a droll grin, as "Il Signor Generale!" He was, I heard, a Livornese, and named Scarselli. Cesare treated him with extreme reserve and coldness, and I followed his example. With this detachment—which I learned was to be distributed amongst various corps when we came up with Nullo—we marched for that and the following day; Cesare being always my companion, while Carlino and Angelo preferred the society of the Livornese.

As we passed the little villages and towns that lay on our way, little enthusiasm greeted us; a cry of "Viva l'Italia, Viva Garibaldi," was the extent of the welcome we met with. The villagers usually closed their doors, while the women would flaunt a handkerchief from the windows. Beyond these cheap manifestations, we got nothing. The orders against pillage were rigid in the extreme, and we did our utmost to observe them. Punishment, however, was not always practicable. The derelict usually ran away, and occasionally carried off three or four sympathisers along with him. Still, even the small amount of discipline we could enforce, was a wonderful restraint, and I have seen these famished boys tracking their

weary way under a blazing sun, with the loaded vines on each side of them untouched, while, when a well came in sight, they would break the ranks, and scramble in wildest confusion to wet their parched lips.

It was on, I think, the evening of the 14th of August, as we halted in a field of newly-cut maize, that I saw the first soldier of the royal army who had joined us; he was a corporal of the Bersaglieri, and came into our lines with his brevet of lieutenant in the front of his cap, signed by General Nicotera, provisionally, till approved by Garibaldi. His arrival was very cheering to us all. The fellow was one of those plausible rogues whom, even while you discredit, you listen to. He said the whole army was coming over; that nothing but Garibaldi's assurance that he was ready to open the campaign was wanting to bring all the royal troops to our standard. "A few of the old generals, perhaps," said he, hesitatingly, "will hold back. La Marmora, Durando, Sonnaz, and Cialdini, will not be with us, but we'll have fifty good as they, and promotion will be all the quicker for the vacancies." Amongst the small sprinklings of truth that dropped from him, was the news that General Mella was four miles off with a strong column moving on Messina, intending to anticipate Garibaldi's arrival in that city. The prospect of being recaptured by this party imparted to all his mention of them a most lively interest, which we only half sympathised with. It was useless to assure him that by his account the royal troops would be soon all on our side; he answered, that before that short time might elapse it might be all over with him.

As we drew nigh Castro Giovanni, we heard that Garibaldi had passed three days before, with two strong columns, on his way to Messina, and left orders that all the detachments, as they came up, should push vigorously on to Aderno, where further orders would await them.

Whether acts of indiscipline had already become more frequent, or, that, as the force increased, a stricter rule was more imperative, but our commander, Scarselli, proclaimed at morning parade that he had received the General's orders to be more rigid in future, and upon no plea whatever to exempt any man from the duty that pertained to his rank.

"This is for us," whispered Cesare to me. "The fellow resents our estrangement, and will make us pay for it." And true enough, though hitherto we had only marched with the force, taking no part of its duties, nor joining in its drills, we were now peremptorily ordered to "fall in" and learn our exercise.

Now, Cesare had served two years in the "Piemonte Reale" Lancers, and was a thorough soldier, and had no fancy for being sent to school under a Jew money-changer from Leghorn, as we found out Scarselli to have been, plus the sentence of a tribunal over him for fraudulent bankruptcy. My friend Cesare, with more zeal than prudence, let Scarselli see that he was familiar with his history, and that he had not the slightest intention of "making

his first arms" under him. The scene in which the altercation occurred was a stormy one, and ended by Scarselli placing two sentries over Cesare's door, and despatching, as *he* said, an orderly to General Garibaldi for instructions.

The next morning, when we mustered, it was found Cesare had escaped—got away, it was said, in the night, and taken to the mountains. It was only within the last few days that I found out the truth, and then through a paragraph in a newspaper. Scarselli, knowing that Cesare had served in the Piemonte Reale Regiment, thought or hoped, though he had long quitted the service, that he would be still treated as a deserter. He therefore bribed two peasants, under pretence of assisting him to escape, to conduct him to General Mella's head-quarters. In the attempt to destroy, he probably saved his life, for being liberated on parole, he was obliged to return to his family at Bergamo, where he is, this moment, in security, and I hope health.

As for myself, I submitted with the best grace I could, and, next day, mounted guard over my Hebrew friend. While he sat at dinner, I comforted myself that we would soon be up with the main body, and my troubles ended.

Instead of marching on Aderno, however, we continued more to the south, following the last steps of the mountain chain that descend from Castro, making very short marches, and frequent drills. At length—it was on the evening of the seventeenth, I think, just as we were cooking supper—a mounted orderly rode into camp. He was heated and tired, but he merely stopped to give his orders, and rode on his way. The drum beat the assembly, and we fell in hastily. The orders were to march at once for Catania, where the General then was. He had, by giving a false initiative with Menotti's force, drawn off the royal army towards Messina, and then, taking the opportunity, dashed at once down and entered Catania.

IV. THE CHURCH TOWER AT CATANIA.

I HAD not much time to admire the beauties of Catania, if it have any. I only remember some narrow tumble-down streets, with a very noisy population, waving flags and handkerchiefs from the windows. A great piazza, with a quaint old house at one side, with two marble beasts—lions or leopards—at the door, and a heavy stone balcony over them, on which were standing a number of men in red shirts, but whose appearance bespoke them to be officers. They were, in fact, General Garibaldi's staff, that being his head-quarters. I had only a glance at all this, for we were marched straight to a Capuchin convent, in the court and corridors of which we were to be lodged for the night. Neither my companions nor their fare had made me very enthusiastic as to the enterprise; and although all around me was zeal for the cause, and noisy manifestation of devotion, I sat brooding sadly in a corner of a little crypt, and wondering how and why I had ever come there. Some black bread and onions, and a very

diminutive measure of the sourest wine in the world, were now served to us as rations; but, sweetened by hunger, and that uproar which really my comrades seemed to think a perfect boon from Heaven, the food was eaten, and the banqueters, throwing themselves down, soon fell off to sleep.

Resolving to keep awake—for I had some Napoleons about me and a watch, temptations to which I thought my companions ought not to be exposed—I lighted a cigar, and composed myself for a quiet retrospect.

"Who smokes such good tobacco?" cried a voice from a short distance. "There must be a gentleman amongst us, for that is a real Cuban."

I saw a thin weazen-faced little fellow scanning me through an eye-glass—a piece of curiosity which none around him shared in, for they slept on unmindful of us both.

"If you'll come over here," said I, "I have another like this at your service."

He did not wait for a second invitation, and was seated at my side in an instant.

"How is it that your face is so familiar to me?" asked I of him.

"Of course you know *me*," said he; "and I know *you*. Your box at the Opera is the next to the 'scene,' and though you generally are moving about, I have seen you often in it."

"And you—where is yours?"

"Mine," said he, laughing, "is wherever the piece requires me. I am the baritone Bianciardi."

"So you are. I remember you perfectly now: and what induced you to come here?"

"Why not? The low notes were beginning to go—all the upper ones gone many a day! As well die of a bullet as sink into the chorus. Besides, if we do go to Rome, we, who can write, read, and know music, must get high office. I count upon something snug, I assure you. But what in the name of wonder brought *you* here?"

"The cause!" said I. "The holy cause of Italy, and the noble cry of Rome or Death!"

"Noble fiddlestick! Signor Principe," said he.

"It's all very well for these creatures here to be patriots, but you, whose father has vines and olives, and poderes of maize and wheat, with palaces in town and villas in the country, how are you to grow any better for all this marching and starving? It is more likely we shall think you are too rich one of these days, than not rich enough—there may be another act of the great national drama! Mazzini tells us that all we are doing now is only a stage on the journey, or, as he calls it, a 'mezzo termine.'"

"Listen to Garibaldi, my friend, and not to Mazzini," said I.

"Ah! You know the General?"

"No. Never saw him."

"Per bacco—how strange! Well, I'll present you. I'm rather a favourite of his. I'm an adept at the bugle, and have taught his Bersaglieri fellows all the 'calls,' and invented a few new ones of my own. I'll go with you in the morning, and make you known to him."

I might possibly have preferred a more pretentious patron, but I trusted sufficiently in my own name to make me less mindful of this matter, and so I agreed, and we chatted away for hours. Indeed, he went on talking long after I ceased to reply, and his voice was in my ears as I dropped off to sleep.

Out of a very sound slumber I was aroused by the shrill blast of a key-bugle. It was my friend Bianciardi practising close to my ear, totally regardless of the false alarm he was creating, and the intense state of confusion he was causing. In a short time, and a good deal of laughing, he was silenced, and the drum beat for morning roll.

"Let us slip out of this," whispered he to me. "It will never do for persons of our condition to serve with the Picciotti. We must get on the staff, or at least into Bideschini's brigade; so, come along, and I'll show you the way."

We were soon outside the convent, and traversing a narrow lane called the Condotto, which seemed to have nothing but eating-houses along each side of it.

"What if we were to breakfast first of all?" asked I.

"What if I hadn't a Carlino to pay for it?" said he.

"But I have, which is just as good."

"Let me order it, then," cried he, eagerly.

"There are such exquisite things in these low 'trattorie,' if people only knew of them." I gave him full powers, and sat down to read a dirty little newspaper called the Pungolo. Suddenly my friend started up with the cry of—"There goes the General! there goes Garibaldi!"

I rushed eagerly to the door, and saw a group of six or seven men moving rapidly along towards a small piazza where a church stood. Bianciardi took my arm, and we hastened after them. By the time we gained the piazza the others had reached the church, and passed in. Strangely enough, the custode was proceeding to close the doors after them, when my friend came up; and, after a slight remonstrance, and a very modest bribe, we got leave to follow them.

The custode simply pointed to the tower, up the stairs of which they had gone, and left us.

I own I was not perfectly satisfied with myself for thus obtruding on Garibaldi's notice in a mode so very questionable. Indeed, I hope and believe it would not have been possible for me to have done so but a few weeks before; but the last few days of my life, and my rough companionship, had done the work of years in eradicating notions of delicacy, so up I went, and in a few minutes found myself one of a knot of people on the top of the church tower, keenly engaged in scanning the country beneath, and the large open roadstead that flanks the town.

None noticed or suspected me to be a stranger, and I heard an animated dispute whether a large frigate in the bay were the Duke of Genoa, or the new ship, the Stella d'Italia.

"One thing I'll swear to," cried one, "that long-legged fellow on the poop-deck is Tolosano, the late prefect here. He is a cousin of my own, and I would know him at any distance."

"That's Mella's force you see yonder," said Garibaldi, pointing to a large encampment on the slope of a hill, about three miles off. "You see," added he, with a sweep of his hand, "how they hedge us in by land and by sea. What number of men would you call those yonder, Cairoli?"

"I'd say less than two thousand, General."

"And I would give them between four and five," said Garibaldi. "What do *you* say?" and he handed me his pocket telescope as he spoke.

I looked for an instant, and then taking out my own glass, I saw clearly enough that the force was a large one, and could distinguish the staff officers grouped in front of a tent.

"Will you try this glass, General?" said I, offering it.

"Oh, it's plain enough! I was quite right. What a fine glass. French, isn't it?"

"No, sir, English."

"Better still! By the way—I'm ashamed to say—I forget your name, though I know your face so well."

"I'm afraid that both are strangers to you, General," said I. "I only left my home to follow you a few days ago. I am 'of the Palledoros.' You may know of our family."

"I made free with your father's palace at Palermo in '59," said he, laughing, "and never slept in so grand a bed since. I did my best to avoid all mischief to property, and I hope succeeded; though certain bottles of wine that used to figure at the dinner-table, made me suspect my fellows had found a key to the cellar. What can I do for you?"

"Make of me whatever I'm fit for, General."

"I want an orderly much," said he, pondering. "I have not to ask if you can ride. The puzzle will be how to mount you. They're moving yonder; they're breaking up camp; and see! the frigate is signalling to them. Ay, they surround us land and sea. Land and sea!" repeated he, half mournfully to himself, and then turned to go down.

"Well," whispered Bianciardi, "what did he say to you? Will he make you a colonel? or even a major? and what have you got for me?"

"Beefsteaks and mushrooms which we left smoking at the eating-house, and a flask of Campo-fiorito; that's all up to this time!"

"Speriamo!" cried he, "let us have hope." And, with this piece of philosophy, he stepped out of the church, and hastened off to breakfast.

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